TRIUMPH AND TRAGEDY

SOME PERSONAL REMEMBRANCES OF DUTCH AND EUROPEAN HISTORY IN THE 20TH CENTURY

FLORENTINE S. ROST VAN TONNINGEN

Thanks to all the friends and comrades who contributed to the realisation of this book

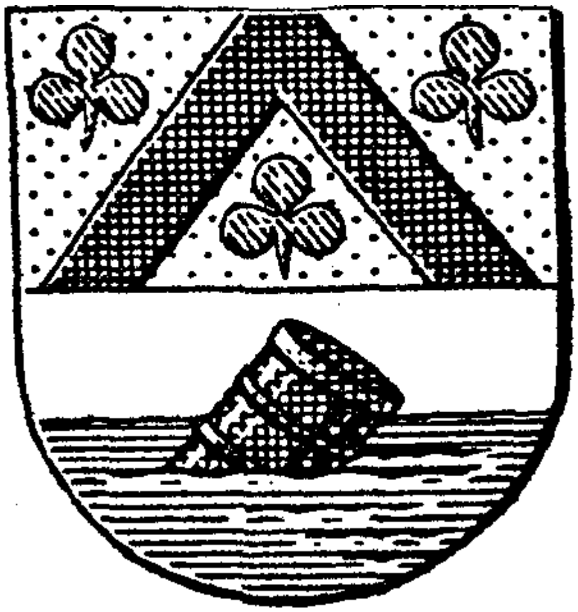
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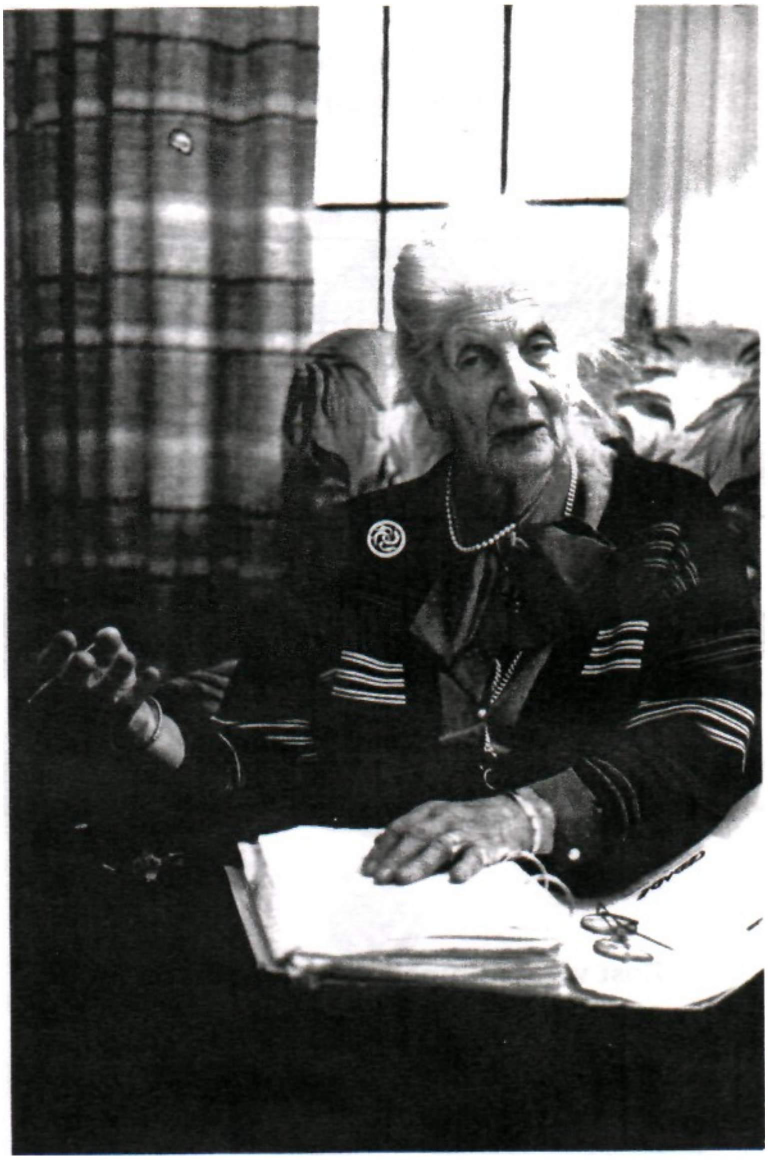
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The truth shall set you free!



Rost van Tonningen family coat of arms

Cover illustration:
The Tree of Life *(Levensboom),* symbol of life and renewal, as depicted on my wedding ring



Dedication

This book is dedicated to my parents and grandparents with gratitude for all the love they gave to me. It is written for my beloved husband, Meinoud, in remembrance of our love. I would like to take this opportunity to thank him for our wonderful marriage and for the cosmic bond we have shared. I wish my children and grandchildren

F.S. Rost van Tonningen-Heubel

I fought with all More
with this world than you
I suffered much
So I suppose did you
And out of cruel wounds and bleeding years
Grew up this book, brimful of love and pain
It is your book!
Take it with gracious hands!

Table of Contents

Preface 9

Chapter One 11

Youth and Studies 11

1.1 My Cradle with Its Swan Motifs *11*
1.2 *A Perky Little Girl* *15*
1.3 *The Sunshine House* *16*
1.4 *Our Tutor Is Admitted to the Sanatorium* *20*
1.5 *Grandfather and Us* *22*
1.6 Playing Tennis with the Princess *27*
1.7 *Our Eastern Neighbours* *30*
1.8 *In the Hospital* *32*
1.9 *Helgoland, Blessed Helgoland* *34*
1.10 My Research at Artis, the Amsterdam Zoo *36*

Chapter Two 39

Viewing the World 39

And Traveling to the Dutch East Indies 39

2.1 *The Rise of National Socialism* *39*
2.2 *From an All-Netherlandish Movement to Germanic Unity* *41*
2.3 *The Crucial Year: 1933* *44*
2.4 *Our Voyage to the Dutch East Indies* *46*
2.5 *The National Youth Movement in the East* *51*

2.6 *In the Forests of Southern Sumatra* 53
2.7 *The Life of M.M Rost van Tonningen, LL.M.* 55
2.8 *My Return to Holland* 62

Chapter Three 67

At **the Centre of Events** 67

3.1 *Barbed Wire* 67
3.2 *Unity**Through Community of the People*** 70
3.3 *The Questionable Neutrality of Prime Minister Colijn* 73
3.4 *The Internment of M.M. Rost van Tonningen* 76
3.5 *Queen Wilhelmina Transfers Her Residence to Britain* 79

Chapter Four 87

My Wedding 87

The War Years, Part One 87

4.1 *Some Important People Daring the German Occupation* 87
4.2 *The Position of the NSB After the Invasion* 96
4.3 *Our Wedding* 99
4.5 *Plans and Rivalries* 103

Chapter Five 113

Our Family Grows 113

The War Years, Part Two 113

5.1 A Son Is Born J13

5.2 *The Tenth Anniversary of the NSB* 116

5.3 *The Nederlandsche Oost Compagnie* 125

5.4 *The Fourth Year of War for Germania* 129

5.5 *The 1944 Railway Strike and a Winter of Hunger* 132

5.6 *A Private Consultation with Dr. Seyss-Inauart* 138

Chapter Six 145

My World Falls Apart **145**

6.1 *The Death of My Brother Wim* 145

6.2 *In Search of a Safe Haven* 149

6.3 *The War Is Lost* 152

6.4 *My Husband as Prisoner of War* 155

6.5 *The Murder of M.M. Rost van Tonningen* 159

6.7 *Political Reversal and the Ensuing Chaos* 161

Chapter Seven **169**

My **Life as a Widow** **169**

7.1 *A LangMarch* 169

7.2 *A World Turned Upside Down* 173

7.3 *Living at Frankenslag 180, The Hague* 178

7.4 *My Investigations Into the Murder of My Husband* 180

Chapter Eight **187**

Solid Ground Under My Feet **187**

8. 1 *The Lucky Find of My House "Ben Trovato "* 187

8.2 *Settled in Velp* *189*
8.3 *Love and Intrigue* *191*
8.4 *Midsummer Solstice 1983* *195*

Chapter Nine **199**

Coming to Terms **199**

9.1 *The Eagle's Nest* *199*
9.2 *Called to a Higher Life* *204*
9.3 *The Situation Today* *208*

Epilogue **215**

Statement **218**

Index 220

Preface

It all began one day in the early sixties, when I received an anonymous telephone call at the office of my company "Verina", The caller asked me to drive to my former home in Diepenveen as soon as possible. He said it might be of great interest for me to go there. Then the conversation was abruptly terminated.

The message left me with the impression of great urgency, so I was on my way to Diepenveen within thirty minutes. Only my two German shepherd dogs accompanied me. I had not seen this house since I fled from it in 1945. 1 wondered what it might look like after all these years. I grew very anxious and excited to get there. When I finally arrived, I could hardly believe my eyes. The house was completely abandoned, and tall grass covered the garden I so loved as a child. The shutters on the house were closed, except for one window, which was little more than a big hole in the wall. I decided to climb through it. But then I thought it best to send my dogs in first. After they had jumped through the open window and nothing happened, I followed. My eyes had to adjust to the darkness. Soon, however, I realised that all the furnishings had been destroyed. All the beautiful Dutch tiles were torn off the walls. Panelling, doors and pipes were broken. Even the toilet bowls were missing. What a sight of destruction!

On the stairway to the first floor I found an old carpet runner, now filthy and faded. The lamp I once designed myself still dangled from an electric wire in our former bedroom. Nothing else was left. Not one single piece of furniture or even the smallest keepsake was left behind.

What a sad experience it was. In a state of shock and utter disbelief I stood leaning against the bare wall. I asked myself if this telephone call had been but a cruel joke to bring me such despair. I felt lonely and sad. Deep in thought I followed the dogs up into the attic, where my husband and I had often enjoyed the beautiful view of our garden. The silence we both treasured so much was still there.

Without any hope of finding anything worth keeping I climbed the few steps to the little tower built onto the attic. As expected, it was empty. But leaning on one of the wooden beams, I found myself staring into the eyes of Florentine Rost van Tonningen. I stood in front of a portrait of myself painted by J. Bodeldijk in Amsterdam in 1941 by commission of my husband. The frame was missing, but the picture was still in good condition.

For me this was a long-lost treasure. It was especially valuable, since it had been a gift from my husband. Carefully, I carried the painting out of the house and put it into my car. With sadness I departed from the place where I had once been so happy with my husband for many months. In my mind I thanked the caller deeply for presenting me with such a wonderful gift.

This painting had caused a lot of sadness and turmoil for the artist, J. Bodeldijk. Even though he had shown no interest in politics and only let the people he was to paint inspire him, *the* government banned his work for ten years, because he made this portrait by commission of my husband. As the classic Dutch playwright Bredero said: "Things may change..."

Chapter One

Youth and Studies

1.1 My Cradle with Its Swan Motifs

My cradle stood in a very carefully decorated nursery in a large house at Breestraat 177 in Amsterdam. All preparation had been made for the new arrival. Father and Mother Heubel already had three children: big brother Dolf, sister Annie and chubby little Wim. They were hoping for another little girl, though this rime preferably without my brother Wim's red hair. Father Heubel was not at all fond of that

But Mother did not care much about this, as she had other worries. Friday the 13th was rapidly approaching, and her daughter was not to be born on such an ominous day. As a good hostess, my mother always made sure that there were never thirteen chairs at the dinner table. If twelve guests were expected, she would bring a fourteenth chair and seat a large doll upon it. Thirteen meant bad luck—which is what her parents had taught her.

Then it happened. The housekeeper and midwife, Nurse Hesse, announced the birth of a healthy baby girl.

I, Florentine Sophie, was born Saturday, November 14, 1914, in Amsterdam. We subsequently moved to the small town of Laren. My father, Gustav Adolph Heubel, was originally from Germany. His mother, though, was bom a Kol, the daughter of Jan Kol, co-partner of the banking house Vlaer & Kol, in the Dutch town of Utrecht. Being German, my father was drafted into the service of his country and became an officer in the German military. The war lasted for four years, from 1914 to 1918. This was a difficult time for our mother, as our house was cold and lonely with Father gone. Some-

how it seemed too big without him. My oldest brother Dolf and my sister Annie went to school; Wim and I had a tutor.

Despite the war, I had a wonderful childhood. Life for me was full of sunshine, and each day I played in our garden, where we kept swans, geese, chickens and two German shepherd dogs. Our gardener, Krijn, was my companion. All the animals and plants were our friends. When I didn't go in to do my studies or was dirty, the tutor would punish me. But Krijn would defend me, because he knew this could happen quite easily. I would rather sit with our dog, Wally, and her puppies in the garden. In summer I could often be found at our little pond, where I loved to catch small frogs. I put them into my white apron to show them to my mother. She was scared of them, and this made me scared, too. I would let go of my apron, and all the little frogs would jump into and on top of everything. Mother would get very angry at this, and the tutor would put me in the corner.

Father came back from the war a short time before it actually ended. He had to take care of banking matters at Vlaer & Kol as soon as he came home, so we would be financially secure.

We then moved to Hilversum, where our new home was called "The Sunshine House". My father loved me very much, despite my red hair. Father used to cut my brother Wim's hair himself. It was so short, the top of his head looked like a stubble field. Everyone teased him so mercilessly about it, that for his twelfth birthday he had only one wish: "I would like to wear a part in my hair".

Thus his greatest wish would be realised. As Wim grew up, he had the most beautiful, wavy, auburn hair that any girl would be jealous of.

Father decided that his daughters should attend an all-girl gymnasium by the name of Godelinde School. Dolf went to high school in Bussum, and Wim attended an advanced school in Hilversum. We were raised strictly, but our home was full of harmony and very functional. Mother was the centre of attention in Hilversurn, and our house was a retreat for many friends and family members. Our parents and grandparents taught us a tot about life, which we carried with us as we grew older.

My father was to me a symbol of friendship between Germany and Holland. He was born in Goslar, Germany, the eldest son out of

eight children. He was expected to follow in his father-in-law's footsteps and become director of Kol & Company in Amsterdam, as well as Vlaer & Kol in Utrecht. Even though he had lived in the Netherlands since he moved there as a boy of fifteen, Father was always homesick for Germany.

He was a bom sportsman. With him we went hiking in the mountains, where he taught us a lot about the dangers, and how to determine weather conditions by looking at the clouds. He taught us how to climb rocks slow and steady. We were taught how to dress for the outdoors, and our backpacks were our constant companions.

Father introduced us to German literature and instilled in us a sense of pride and love for our country. His hobby was collecting butterflies and caterpillars. We children often went out to find a pretty specimen for him. We loved to watch the butterflies, especially the hawkmoth. We enjoyed setting them free in our backyard. Father was especially fond of silkworms, and since they enjoyed the taste of mulberry leaves, he planted a lot of mulberry trees in our backyard. When I grew older, I worked at Artis, the Amsterdam zoological garden, for Dr. Portielje. I asked him if I could bring some of the tropical caterpillars home to my father.

He gave me a few boxes to take home, and after a while we had about 25 tropical butterflies, which we set free in our garden. The next day we saw an article in our local newspaper that read: "Great Discovery Made. Exotic Butterflies Spotted in Hilversum." Through my father I gained a love and understanding for plants and animals at an early age. Brehm's *Animal Life* was our guidebook. On our walks and hikes, Father would teach us how to tell the difference between poisonous and edible mushrooms. He would show us how to cut the stem carefully without damaging the mycelium. Whenever we brought mushrooms home, the cook would prepare them deliciously.

Mother was an ideal wife and mother, besides being beautiful. She was the only child bom to Willem Johannes van Haren Noman. He raised his daughter with a firm hand, but spoiled her with love and attention. Despite the fact that her father was against her marriage to a half German, the name Kol eventually made up for that. She lived very happily with my father, and their marriage could be an

example for the youth of today. My mother was very dedicated to her husband and remained at his side through all German-Dutch differences, always showing her love, bravery and strong character.

Mother took pride in her greenhouse filled with many exotic plants and flowers, which had to be watered daily. And then there were her bees... Sometimes her bees were a real problem for us. Mother did not just have two or three beehives. No, she kept 15 or 16 of them! Mother suffered from arthritis, so that she often had difficulty walking. She would call upon her children to help her, and since we were all wild about honey, we did not complain. My oldest brother, Dolf, did a lot of the work, but the younger children had the dubious pleasure of recapturing the bee swarms after they had escaped from the hives. I can remember being sent up a ladder on a tree to capture a swarm. If Mother had informed us then that bees never sting while swarming, we probably would have accepted this task more willingly.

Mother was an artist, a very talented painter, as was my grandfather. He gave Mother an excellent education in this field. But she was too good a caring wife and mother to find much time to paint while there were so many chores to be done. Our house was always full of guests, such as our grandparents and family members from Germany.

My family could never agree on the subject of flags. In those days it was the custom to put a flag up on Queen's Day and other national holidays. Our gardener had to raise the Dutch flag on the flagpole out front and a German flag beside it, because even though our *father* had become a Dutch citizen in 1919, he insisted that a German flag be raised as well. Mother did not like this idea at all. One day she had the German flagpole taken down by one of the gardeners. When my father came home that day, he simply took his beloved German flag and draped it over the large balcony at the front of the house. Now it was more visible than ever before. Then my mother gave up. She realised that this was a battle she could not win.

1.2 A Perky Little Girl

I was a lively little thing with grey-blue eyes and reddish-blond hair. It was short and held together on top of my head with a big bow. I had a best friend at the Godelinde School. She was about my height and weight, but otherwise the total opposite of me. She was dark, with brown eyes and brown hair. Everywhere we went, people would say, "Here comes light and dark". I had a strong sense for colours, which I developed early.

My Mother had dresses for my sister and me carefully made by our seamstress. She had good taste, and therefore we always looked very nice. One day I got a green dress made out of *crêpe de Chine.* At first I was only to wear it on Sundays, but eventually I was allowed to wear it to school I was so proud that I took my apron off, so the colour would show up really well. After a while the dress became too tight over my chest So Mother took some orange doth, which she fitted in between the seams. I refused to wear it, but all my crying didn't do me any good. Finally, I had to be dragged to school wearing the dress. In those days we were to keep our hands neatly on top of the desk. I was so embarrassed by the dress, that I kept rny fists pressed tightly over my chest. The teacher told me to take them down, but I could not. So she dragged me out into the aisle and purposely embarrassed me in front of the whole class. I got so mad that I ran home, took off the hated dress, and stuck it into the trash can, right underneath all the kitchen garbage. My mother found me in the hallway, in tears and wearing only my undergarment. She asked me what had happened. I finally said: "How could you make me go to school like this! You know how I hate orange. It doesn't match my hair. Can't anyone see this but me? Why did you do such a terrible thing to me?" It shouldn't be too hard to imagine what happened to me next!

My brother Wim had troubles of a similar nature. He often had to wear suits passed on to him by Dolf. One day Mother found an old

faded suit and decided it would be like new if she dyed it She then dyed it chocolate brown and draped it over Wim's chair for him to wear. Wim told rny mother that under no circumstances would he wear this suit to school. He said he would be the laughing stock of the entire school if he, a boy of thirteen, wore a chocolate-coloured suit. My mother insisted that he wear it anyway. Whereupon Wim grabbed it, ran into the kitchen and burned a hole in it on the stove. He got a good beating, but at least he did not have to worry about that suit anymore.

Besides our loving Dutch grandparents, we often had Grandmother Kol over from Germany. She had been a widow for a long time, and her greatest wish was to go back to Holland to stay. She had a bad case of rheumatism and was confined to a wheelchair. She had a nurse, Miss Price, who accompanied her on her trips. I liked nothing better than to sit in our cosy living room, listening to her beautiful Dutch conversation. She also painted beautifully, and once while she was painting she said to me: "Child, life is a challenge, and everyone has to carry one's own luggage, some large and some small. The heavier, the better for us. So when your time comes and you go through hardship, do not cry or complain, but carry your load with a happy face." I often remembered this in my later years and to this day try to live by it. Thank you, my dear parents and grandparents, for raising me to be mature and conscious, helping me to understand the very roots of my being.

1.3 The Sunshine House

As I mentioned earlier, my father bought a house in Hilversum after he returned from the war. The house was beautifully situated, but my father thought it was too small for our family. He hired several contractors to remodel the entire house and add some more rooms to it. During the remodelling period, Wim and I were to go and stay with our grandparents in Amsterdam.

Stien, our Grandparent's maid, never failed to impress me with her pretty lace caps, her blue-and-white striped blouse, and her starched, snow-white apron. She was the head of the household, and we' respected her greatly. She was the one who greeted us when we arrived at our grandparents' house. She took me by the hand and led us into the living room, where our grandparents were waiting for us. Wim bowed in front of Grandfather, then kissed him on his cheek. I curtseyed before throwing my arms around Grandmother's neck. We knew what was expected of us. Our tutor hadn't failed to give us a few extra lessons before we left home. We were glad she hadn't accompanied us on this trip.

Visiting our grandparents was wonderful. They took us on many outings. The best part of our vacation was a trip to the famous puppet theatre in Amsterdam. One thing cast a shadow over my vacation, however. Each night Stien would take me up to a room on the second floor, where she tucked me into a huge old bed. In this room was a sideboard with a mirror, and on top of the sideboard my grandparents kept an old, silver clock with a pendulum. Stien told me not to fuss or cry. Then she would turn off the lights and close the door. The clock frightened me and made me feel very lonely, way up there on the second floor. I would lay awake and listen to the chime that sounded every quarter of an hour, followed by deep, hollow strokes. I could not fall asleep, and all the beams and planks seemed to creak and crack around me. Often I was still awake to hear the clock strike midnight.

After a while my father came to take us back to Hilversum. We could hardly wait to see our new home. When we finally arrived, we found that it was big and beautiful. It had a white peaked fence all around the yard, with a big gate. It also had a small door just for us children. Our mother stood at the front door waiting for us. As we went inside, we found one room prettier than the next. The ground floor had three large windows feeing south. In front of the middle room, our dining room, was Mother's winter garden with large windows. This is where we used to have tea with our guests. Our house could have been a museum for all the treasures gathered there. We had a music room with a Steinway piano, mahogany tables and

twelve chairs, an antique desk with a secret compartment, and a very old clock with golden inlays made in 1700.

The walls in our house were covered with paintings by the Maris brothers, Mondriaan, Huidekoper, Schulman... My father was a collector of art paintings, as well as old copper and Persian tapestries. Our house was filled with antique valuables. The dining room was, as I mentioned earlier, the middle room. There we had a long oak table with twelve oak chairs, a china cabinet, a buffet and an open fireplace with copper kettles. The living and dining rooms were separated by big sliding doors. These were kept closed in the winter, but were open during the summer. The winter garden led to a large patio that stretched for ten metres around the house. My father's study was his private retreat. Here he used to take his Sunday-afternoon naps, always covering himself with a newspaper, which reminded him of his time as a soldier. He had large bookcases with mostly German books. He had a large desk surrounded by beautiful, comfortable chairs and his own fireplace.

On the other side of the hallway was the garden room. This was the children's place, where our tutor ruled. Here we made little crafts for our parents. On the second floor we had three large bedrooms with windows facing south. The biggest bedroom belonged to our parents- It was almost completely lined with mahogany and had a balcony with lots of plants covering the balustrade. The middle bedroom belonged to me, and the third to Wim. On the other side of the hallway was a guest room for my grandparents and a bathroom. All rooms were joined either by closets or sliding doors, but were never locked at all times. Finally, on the third floor there was the room that belonged to Dolf. It was his private domain, with a spectacular view over the entire "Gooi" country. Above this room was the attic. This was a sanctuary for books on all subjects. There was also enough room for two small servant chambers and a small living room that became my own little retreat in later years.

Altogether it was a wonderful house and surely one of the most beautiful houses in Hilversum. In the front yard we had flowerbeds and tall pine trees that had been imported from the Harz Mountains. On the side of the house we had rock gardens as welt as a rose bed. In the backyard we kept our beehives, towered over by tall trees. We

also had an orchard, a vegetable garden and our "sanctuary"-garden just for us children—where we kept all our animals and where we had our own little green playhouse.

The main family events were the holidays. My father, being German, especially liked Christmas, but Mother preferred Saint Nicholas' Eve. The Dutch feast of *Sinterklaas,* or Saint Nicholas, is celebrated on the 5th of December. We took turns celebrating Christmas one year and *Sinterklaas* the next. Both holidays were very nice. When we celebrated *Sinterklaas,* we got baskets full of little packages, which we stacked in the laundry room until St. Nicholas entered the house. Each gift had a little poem attached to it. No one can imagine the happy faces on such harmonious and wondrous nights like these. When we celebrated Christmas, my father was in his true element. AH by himself he would decorate a Yule tree, three metres tall, in the winter garden. Servants would bring in little tables with white tablecloths. Everybody, including our tutor, the gardener and the maids would have their own places at which to sit. On Christmas Eve, Father would open the big sliding doors to the winter garden, so we could admire the beautiful tree. We would start the celebration by singing Christmas carols and with Father playing the piano or violin. Then it was time to open our packages, which often contained new skates, jackets, sweaters, gloves or some surprise made by our parents. My mother would read the Christmas story, and the servants would bring warm wine and cakes. After this we would embrace our parents and grandparents, thank them for a wonderful evening and for all the gifts they had chosen for us.

Thinking back, I believe we spent the happiest years of our childhood at Sunshine House. No dark clouds had yet appeared to overshadow our happiness.

1.4 Our Tutor Is Admitted to the Sanatorium

Looking back on our family life in Hilversum, I can only say that it was a wonderful time, and I shall always be grateful that our parents gave us such a solid foundation for our lives.

We had a daily routine, which we kept without exception. Every morning one of the maids woke us up, and while we washed our faces and brushed our teeth, she polished our shoes. We dressed and packed our school bags, then went downstairs to have breakfast under our tutor's supervision. We ate and went to wish our mother good morning. Father left the house at seven o'clock in the morning and usually returned home at seven in the evening. Occasionally, he would come home a little later. Wim and I would then eat dinner with our tutor, who made sure that we ate with good manners and in proper silence.

I had trouble in school, because I had my own strategy for keeping my grades at an acceptable level while still having enough time for my favourite pastimes. I had good grades in German language, history, biology, handwriting, drawing and sports. My grades in the other classes were somewhat less satisfactory. Biology and drawing were my favourite subjects. We had a biology teacher, Miss Idenburg, who was very ugly but knew how to present the subject in a captivating way, for which I am still grateful to her to this day. Once a week she would take us on a nature walk in a nearby wood, where she would point out interesting trees and plants. She would teach us how to recognise different bird calls and make our homework exciting by giving us assignments, such as drawing a special leaf or pressing some interesting plant we had found.

Miss Idenburg once came to see my father, with the suggestion that he should allow me to go to college at the University of Utrecht My father told her that this would not be necessary, since I came from a wealthy family and would not have to support myself. Wim and I loved to play Cowboys and Indians with our friends. On rainy

days we played in the attic with our train set We also melted bottle caps, which we poured into moulds to form soldiers, knights and horses. We then pretended to send them to war on our toy train.

The only dark spot in our lives was our unloved tutor. I have to admit that Wim and I did cause our parents quite a bit of trouble. Still, she seemed to like me quite well, but could hardly stand the sight of Wim. She always scolded him for one thing or another and punished us often. She accused him of lying. One day, after we were locked in our room for punishment, we escaped through a window that was left open. Unfortunately, Wim hit his head on the wall, which caused him to have a big bruise. The tutor immediately requested to speak to my mother about our behaviour. Since we knew that we were in for a lot of trouble, we hid under the large dining room table. The long tablecloth covered us. As we heard what the tutor accused us of, we could not keep silent any longer. We charged out from under the table like little furies. Tearfully we yelled: "She's lying, this terrible, ugly person is always telling lies about us. It all happened differently!" My mother was so surprised, she didn't know what to do with us. She sent us to our rooms until she had a chance to talk to our father about it

When he came home, Mother told him what had happened. She expected his support and thought we really deserved a beating. Our father pointed out to her that he was simply tired of hearing complaints from and about the tutor almost every single night. He never had much trouble with Wim or me, but he worried about something else. He thought it was time to talk to his wife about it. "Cor", he said, "I am worried about this tutor of ours. She is coughing too much, she doesn't eat right, and she doesn't look good at all. I think we should get her some medical treatment. What if she's ill?" So Miss Wildeman was sent to our physician, who sent her to a sanatorium for treatment of tuberculosis. Father paid for all of her expenses and continued to support her financially after she was released. But he thought it would be better if she did not return to our house. We felt badly for her, but were also very happy to be rid of this dreadful person.

1.5 Grandfather and Us

My mothers' father, Grandfather van Haren Noman, was a man of great stature. He and Grandmother would spend the summer months visiting us, but travel to Nice during the winter. Whenever we heard a coach come to halt in front of our house, we knew Grandfather and Grandmother had arrived with lots of suitcases filled with large and small gifts for all of us.

Grandfather had a lot of influence in our family. He insisted that Dolf be sent to Wageningen to study tropical farming in the Dutch East Indies. Grandfather completely took Dolfs future in his own hands. He never had a son himself, so he treated Dolf like the son he had wanted. We younger children didn't like this very much, but since I had shown an interest in animals and nature at an early age, Dolf and I came to a profitable relationship. Dolf took advantage of the fact that he was ten years older than me and often made me clean his shaving knife or bring his bicycle to Bussum, if he needed it there. These chores were very important to me.

Our parents allowed each of us to keep three different types of animals, as long as we took care of them ourselves. I kept a guinea pig, rabbits and white mice. Together with Wim, we also looked after some pigeons as well as the two dogs. I loved to experiment with the animals, and after a while I had 100 guinea pigs, 100 rabbits and countless mice. My oldest brother and his friends admired me for this, and taught me as a ten year old girl everything they knew about breeding. I playfully learned the Mendelian Laws, as I crossed the different types of rabbits. Because of my youth, I didn't realise that my brother was using the results of my experiments for his own agricultural studies. He later made good use of them in the Dutch East Indies. I had only love and admiration for my brother and his friends.

In the year 1926 my father informed us that Grandmother Heubel-Kol was coming to live with us. Even though her husband had

their house in Goslar especially designed so she could get around in her wheelchair, she was no longer able to maintain the place by herself. All of her children had moved away, and her husband had died years ago. The house seemed too big and lonely for her. It was also very difficult and expensive to find a good, trustworthy housekeeper who could satisfy my grandmother's needs. We decided to turn Father's study into a nice, private room for her. Grandmother was very happy that her dream of returning to her native country would finally come true. She had always loved the Sunshine House and our family. My parents knew that they would have to attend to my grandmother, but it was only the natural thing for them to do. This was the way things were back then. The elderly were cared for by their children.

After Grandmother moved in with us, we quickly realised that she was a very sick woman. She caught pneumonia and rheumatic fever. Her health deteriorated rapidly. After a few months of suffering, our beloved grandmother closed her eyes forever on January 20, 1927. She was buried at the family tomb in Goslar by her husband's side. During her illness my parents were unable to invite Grandfather and Grandmother van Haren Noman over. We loved the idea that out grandparents were living permanently in The Hague, even during the winters. The trips to Nice became a thing of the past.

We were often invited to visit our grandparents on holidays and special occasions. Their house became one of the most beautiful homes in Holland, since my grandfather had it remodelled according to his own ideas and designs. Our grandparents often took us to the theatre and art galleries. We children had a special kind of relationship with our grandfather. His presence could be felt everywhere. He appeared to be a dominant man, while Grandmother stayed quietly in the background. She had a lot of style and etiquette. She disliked spontaneous whimsies. She always insisted that we speak and dress as people from the upper class were expected to. This was not always to our liking. She had two maids and one servant. They were expected to do exactly as they were told. Even the slightest mistakes were not tolerated and could cost them their jobs. Grandmother's high standards had to be met at all times. Nevertheless, we loved her in our own way. We used to feel sorry for her, because Grandfather always took the lead. It seemed as though she was not allowed to

speak her own mind or express her own opinions. We were mistaken, however. After Grandfather died, we quickly came to realise that she was, in fact, a very strict and domineering woman. It helped us understand an argument my grandparents once had. We overheard Grandfather saying: "Can't you be happy for once? Why don't you ever get excited, say something, every now and then?"

I remember an incident at a movie theatre in Hilversum. We were standing in line as my grandfather's stocking holder came open and slithered across the floor. With his great voice he yelled, "Anna, wait a moment, my stocking holder just came undone. I have to fasten it right quick." This was too much for Grandmother, so she pretended not to have heard anything. My grandfather was mad and yelled even louder: "My God, don't make me so much out of it, Anna. It is normal for this sort of thing to happen." Everybody had a good time over this incident—except my grandmother.

Another day Wim and Grandfather were talking while taking a walk down the street. They saw one of Wim's teachers riding towards them on a bicycle. Wim whispered to Grandfather that they had to be very nice and friendly, since this was the teacher who had given Wim a lot of trouble before. Imagine what happened next. The moment my brother was getting ready to greet his teacher with a polite bow, Grandfather grabbed the ends of his coat and started dancing... Wim was very upset. But Grandfather told him: "My boy, if you are embarrassed to show that you are human, then there's something definitely wrong. I am your grandfather, and I am allowed to dance. I don't care what your teacher thinks of me." My brother grew silent.

Out of petulance towards my grandfather's dominant influence in the family, Father took Wim out of school and to the Hamburg office, where he was to learn his father's business. My grandfather also concerned himself with my upbringing. Because I had a talent for art, he gave me drawing lessons and proved himself to be a very good teacher.

On another outing my grandfather took me to the *Ryksmuseum* in Amsterdam. We had to take the tram, but only caught it at the last moment. So we had to stand outside on the platform of the streetcar. Suddenly Grandfather started sneezing, and his new denture fell

out of his mouth onto the tracks. He didn't want it to get run over, so he grabbed his denture, put it back into his mouth, and was happy to have his teeth back. Finally, one time my grandparents took Wim and me to Paris to see a stage play at the theatre. My grandfather always believed that he had inherited a talent for speaking all languages very well. We took a coach to the theatre. The coachman was a remarkable man of great stature. We were all dressed in our finest clothing, and Grandmother made it a point to show that we were a family of high standards. My grandfather must not have told the driver very clearly where we wanted to go, because the man passed the theatre right by. Grandfather jumped up in his seat and yelled, *"Cacbonn, arêtez-vous!"*, mistaking the word *cochon*, or pig, for *cocher*—coachman. The coachman got very angry about this.

As a young boy Grandfather once travelled to England with his parents. He wore his hair in curls and dressed in velvet suits. On the ferry he attracted the attention of a British couple. The woman told her husband, "Look, he looks just like The Little Lord' by Francis Burnett." This was just the kind of thing Grandfather liked to hear.

He was a proud person all of his life, little Willem van Haren Noman. He also liked to impress people as a child. With this he got himself in trouble once. After betting with a school friend, he climbed to the top of the church tower in Zaltbommel and started singing loudly to all the bystanders below, which looked on at this daring little fellow. After a while, however, he realised that he couldn't get back down. Fire fighters had to be called in to rescue him. This was not an easy task, so by the time he was safely back on me ground he was closer to tears than laughter. Despite the fact that he was a hero for the day, he had to endure a severe beating from his father.

This was my grandfather, Willem Johannes van Haren Noman. Everything comes to an end sometime. On a train ride one day, my grandfather tried to lift a heavy piece of luggage onto the rack and broke his arm. He had to stay in bed, where he caught pneumonia and died on July 13,1930. While we were little, he tried to make us believe that he would never die, because his nose was so big that his last breath would always go back into it—thus giving him everlasting

life. He forgot to tell us that we inhale—not exhale—our last breath, which takes us back into the great universe.

Even after his death my grandfather was full of surprises. As soon as his passing became known to the public, a huge car pulled up, and a gigantic box was delivered in the front yard. Grandmother opened it and found herself confronted with a life-size portrait of her husband. He had it painted by Spoor a few months prior to his death. He had it kept at the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. He ordered that this portrait be sent to his widow in the event of his death. Grandmother could not stand to see this picture, since she had just lost her husband. In fact, she had buried him that same day. She had the picture taken back to Amsterdam, and for a long time she could not so much as look at it.

My brother Dolf and Grandfather always shared a special bond At the time of Grandfather's death, Dolf lived in the Dutch East Indies with his wife. One day we received a letter from him in which he told us that during the night that Grandfather died, he was awakened by a loud noise in his bedroom but couldn't see anything unusual. He was convinced that it was Grandfather telling him goodbye.

My grandmother was the opposite of her husband. She walked through life gracefully, but was rather unapproachable. Everything, including her house, rooms and servants, had to be up to her own high standards. I remember one day that I had been drawing in Grandfather's study, when Grandmother became terribly angry because I had not placed the pencils down side by side. Everything ought to be in its proper place.

When my grandfather was buried and the house was full of guests, there was no place for me to sleep but in my grandparents' bed—on the side where my grandfather had slept for so many years. Because of grief over the loss of my grandfather, I could not fall asleep. My pillow was wet with tears. Since I thought my grandmother was already asleep, I got out of bed to cool my face at the open window. But as soon as I stepped out of bed I heard Grandmother's harsh voice saying: "Florrie, you are acting foolish, go back to bed before you catch a cold. And I want to sleep now, so be

quiet." The rest I so desperately needed, however, did not come to me that night.

1.6 Playing Tennis with the Princess

My parents had a lot of influence in our community, not only because we were wealthy, but also because our house was known for many special events and entertainments. It was a lively house, where many guests came and went. Our parents had raised us children with good manners and social skills. I am convinced that many a young man and lady dreamt of a permanent attachment to one of us, just to become part of such wonderful and loving family. Dolf was already taken. His high-school sweetheart was his steady girlfriend. Her name was Tine, but we called her Tinka. My brother wanted to make it clear to everybody that Tinka was his girl, his very own possession.

One day during a very boring class where Tinka was sitting right in front of him, Dolf decided to tie both of her long braids to his desk. When she tried to get up and painfully discovered what Dolf had done, she became so angry it almost cost them their friendship. She eventually forgave him, and after a long courtship they were married. After Dolf completed his studies at Wageningen, he got a good position as farming advisor in the Dutch East Indies. Tinka and Dolf moved to Java and later lived on the island of Sumatra. Tinka always stood by Dolf. She was a good hostess and a wonderful, loving wife and mother. She was well liked by all their friends and guests, but never got over her longing for the Netherlands. She could never really get used to the culture and customs of the East.

My sister Annie was a pretty girl, well groomed by my mother. But she had problems with her identity. She never had many friends, except for the young men Dolf brought home. She would never have been allowed to marry one of these young men, however—my mother did not want her daughter to marry below her social level.

My sister admired Krishnamurti and went to many of his lectures. One day she went to a very important lecture in Ommen, where Krishnamurti was to speak, along with Annie Besant. By this time I had already heard endless stories about him, so I went along with Annie out of curiosity. It was impressive, as Krishnamurti stood in the light of a campfire. His handsome face turned toward his followers, with Annie Besant beside him, her beautiful white hair flowing in the wind. Seated in a big circle were followers from all nations. My sister was very much taken by all of this. But to me it seemed unnatural and did not meet my standards of Western spirituality and religion. I felt like a stranger and never showed any further interest in Krishnamurti and his teachings.

One day Annie announced to my father that she had fallen in love with a man named James. Sure enough, a few days later the doorbell rang, and our maid was very surprised to see a man who requested to speak to Father. He was a very good-looking man of dark colour, carrying a big bouquet of red roses. As soon as my father saw all those flowers, he grew irritated. He asked the visitor right away about the purpose of his visit, saying, "What exactly are you doing here, and what is the reason for your visit?" James was not discouraged by my father and said straight out, "Sir, I am asking for the hand of your daughter Annie in marriage." The look on my father's face said more than a thousand words. The last I saw were the roses sailing through the air and James heading for the door. My father forbade him to ever set foot in our house again.

This experience was especially painful for Annie, since she had just recovered from another big disappointment. My brother Wim and I had teased her, because she was rather clumsy. One day Wim suggested playfully that she should cut her beautiful, curly blond hair to give herself a sporty kind of look. We never thought that she would take us seriously. One Saturday evening our grandfather was over for a visit. Annie came home with a nice, but very short haircut Our eyes just about popped out of our heads, and Grandfather started yelling at her right away: "What did you do now? All your femininity is gone. How plain you look. Go away, and don't make me look at you." He was so angry with her, that he didn't speak to her or my parents for a whole week. After this Annie became very

shy and quiet. So my parents sent her on a skiing trip with a lot of other young girls and boys, to give her some diversion.

Wim and I were very active and went to the tennis court every morning. It so happened that Madame Guépin saw us there one morning. She went to my mother to ask her if she would let us come to her house to play tennis with Princess Juliana, who was visiting her during vacation. My mother dressed us in our best clothes, and promptly sent us to the Princess. We had to drink a cup of tea with her and Madame Guépin before we went outside. We were told to let the Princess win, although we were much better players. We tried our best to lose. But Juliana was such a terrible player that we won anyway, no matter how hard we tried not to. Juliana did not mind this at all. She was a nice person, very friendly and courteous.

Princess Juliana had fallen in love with Wim Roëll, a young man who had been a friend of Dolf for a while. This same Wim Roëll later joined the Underground during the war and was captured by *SS Obergruppenfuhrer* Rauter. After a serious conversation between the two, Roëll gave his word of honour as an officer not to work for the Resistance again. Shortly after he was released, he broke this given word and was recaptured. He was executed immediately, even though he begged and pleaded for mercy. Rauter told him that he deserved to die—an officer who breaks his word of honour pronounces his own death sentence. Later, when Juliana became Queen, she asked Roëll's sister, Lady Bienebett Roëll, to be her lady-in-waiting. I knew Bienebett Roëll from the Godelinde School in Hilversum.

My father, G. A. Heubel, was a banker of old virtue. His goal was to gain the trust of his clients, and eventually he only dealt with people who could be trusted in turn. It would be unthinkable for him to speculate with the funds that his clients entrusted to him. He would never take the slightest chance or risk. In his opinion this would have been a serious felony. Father had some Jewish clients, who were not disturbed by the fact that he was part German and, therefore, dedicated to Germany as well,

Wim was to be my father's heir in the business, much to the liking of Father's co-partner, Eef Kol, who was very impressed by Wim. After months of hard work, a wonderful summer vacation

would follow. My father insisted that the whole family should come along whenever possible. Father made sure that we came to love and value Germany—and Austria—as well as our own country. We went on countless mountain hikes to the Brocken, as well as expeditions to the Zugspitze and the Karwendel Mountains.

On October 8, 1928, my parents celebrated their 25th wedding anniversary. We all came together to write a stage play and poems, which we performed and recited at a dinner party following the reception. My sister-in-law Tine, my sister Annie and I also performed a dance, which we had been practising for months. We wore pastel-coloured ballet dresses especially designed for us.

On this special event my father thought it would be nice for us to buy an automobile. This was an outrageous thing to do in those days. My father had learned how to drive during our last vacation. I remember my mother sitting in the back seat, scared to death, while my father sat behind the wheel next to the instructor. The instructor never seemed to care much about all the dangers around us, but let my father drive down steep slopes and curvy roads. Despite the fact that my father didn't know much about automobiles, he was issued a driver's licence. One sunny day our first car arrived. It was a *Horch,* a wonderful brown auto with a sunroof made out of cloth, which could be opened by the push of a button. A silver eagle on the hood gave the car a touch of class and elegance. The first Sunday after we got the vehicle, my father took the whole family for a ride. The sunroof was open, of course, so we could be seen by all our friends and neighbours in Hilversum. We had the time of our lives!

1.7 Our Eastern Neighbours

My grandfather, Gustav Adolf Heubel, was bom in Hamburg, Germany, in 1850. He married my grandmother, Anna Elizabeth Kol, in Utrecht in 1873. He owned a paper factory near Goslar, called the Pahlandsmühle. Each morning he rode to the sawmill in

his coach. My grandmother was born in Utrecht. The family business was right beside the house she was born in. Vlaer & Kol was founded by my great-grandfather, Jan Kol, who lived from 1789 to 1848. My father, being the eldest son of eight children, was expected to take over the business at an early age. Therefore my father felt obliged to care for his mother and youngest siblings, who lived in Germany.

This very materialistic German family came to visit our family in Hilversum on a regular basis. My mother, being proud of her qualities as a hostess, would feel hurt and angry when my uncle would come to the breakfast table with his own big meat sandwiches. The family was convinced that our sausages did not measure up to what it was used to in Germany. My brother Wim and I disliked these uncles, but our good father told us to stop this anti-German behaviour. We refused to be nice to these "Sausage Germans", but convinced our father that we were really dedicated to Germany, and that we could prove it to him. Why else would we have paid this much attention to German events? Why would we have asked our father over and over again about his country? Could our father call us anti-German, when we attended German youth gatherings to keep ourselves informed? Finally, my father agreed as to our devotion. But he also said that he would not let us destroy the harmony within his own family. He expected us to be friendly to our uncles, since they were his brothers and he loved them dearly. We understood this and tried to suppress our true feelings toward our uncles, as well as our German nieces and nephews, who hadn't yet thought about the changes that were coming.

Nobody could have convinced us that things would stay the same. We knew they would not. All kinds of German youth groups were forming. We enjoyed our endless conversations with the German youth. They shared so much comradeship, pride and devotion. Everyone seemed happy and full of hope for their country. This kind of love for the nation was missing in the Netherlands. We did have a group called the AJC in Holland, which organised dances and fairs. Their members, however, were mainly children from lower-class families who did not feel any nationalism, but were taught class struggle and free love. This was something we could not relate to.

We also disliked the Boy Scouts. This movement was an international organisation under the influence of Baden Powell. We searched for something deeper. We wished for a strong and positive youth. We longed for comradeship, for the happiness our eastern neighbours displayed, the sense of love and pride we desperately needed here in the Netherlands. This was our dream.

1.8 In the Hospital

It was customary in our family for all daughters to be sent abroad after their graduation, in order to learn foreign languages. I was sent first to Lausanne and then to England.

Later on I began the study of biology. In those days biology studies began with two years of study of both plants and animals. Then we could choose to continue our study with either botany or zoology. I was determined to study zoology. Besides biology we also took courses in mathematics, chemistry, mineralogy and geology—all together, a wonderful, interesting and challenging study. We were expected to use our vacations to gather experience, either on our own or in foreign countries. We had to write our experiences down and present them to our professor after the vacation was over. My training period was in Dahlem near Berlin. Here I had a wonderful time. I was in Berlin in a time full of idealism and excitement. From close at hand I witnessed the rise of Hitler. To live through such historic events was an experience so breathtaking that nothing will ever erase it from my mind. Thank you, Berlin... oh wonderful, beautiful city of culture! Excited I returned to Utrecht to continue my studies.

But despite all my intensive studies, outings and happy family life, I had a health problem, which I kept to myself. Because of all my energy, I never really admitted any problem with my gall bladder. But finally, after I had been in bed for eight weeks, I had to give in to major surgery, which at first my father had strictly disapproved of.

But there was no alternative. After my first important exam series at the university, I went to see Dr. Brand at the hospital in Utrecht, where he performed the surgery. But then things went wrong. Nobody had realised how far I had pushed myself and, therefore, had exhausted my entire system.

The surgery took far longer than expected, and I was kept under anaesthesia much longer than feasible. After the surgery was over and I woke up, I stayed very ill for many days. In fact, I spent a whole year at the hospital trying to recover. My father was in a panic and did not want to authorise another operation. As he put it, "Surgery just doesn't work." Dr. Brand, who had become like a second father to me, came to see me every morning at five o'clock before he went hunting, telling anecdotes to cheer me up. Due to my infected gall bladder, I constantly had a very high fever. I was not expected to live much longer. Dr. Brand released me over the Christmas holidays. He thought it would be better for me to die at my parents' house. During an especially bad attack with very high fever, Dr. Brand came rushing to Hilversum. He told me very openly that I had about two or three days to live. But if he could put me in his car right away and take me to the hospital for a second operation, I would perhaps have a chance. Spontaneously I agreed. Against my parents' wishes, I went immediately with my great fatherly friend. And see—the operation was a success! This was in January-February of 1936.

After a celebration on February 21, 1936, I was finally released from the hospital. Thank you all, dear nurses and doctors. Without you I would not be alive today. I spent a part of my life with you, but that is now a thing of the past. To be in a hospital for a whole year at such an early age is not easy. This retreat and the fear of death changed me inwardly. I learned a lot during this year.

After my second quarterly exams, I had a lot of time to read. The *Myth of the Twentieth Century* by Alfred Rosenberg was almost sacred to me. I picked it up over and over again. In this book I came upon a quotation by Herder "*Each nation has its centre of happiness within, as every ball its centre of gravity. This means, to serve with love the honour of our people, out of the living mythos within our soul*" Could anybody have said this more nicely?

As a young girl, confined to the hospital, I often had to do battle with myself. I was only 22 years old, and with each day I seemed to be getting weaker and weaker. It seemed as though I had fallen into a deep sleep, to be rudely awakened by the doctor asking me to chose between life and death. After this I felt like a child, down at the Lord's feet, saying, "Please, do with me as you like," because I already felt the light embracing me like a cosmic power, surrounding my bed, ready to take me. I can still see the bright, fatherly eyes of Dr. Brand as he told me that my parents did not want him to operate. But luckily, he did it anyway. The Sun was shining for me once more. I had entered the hospital as a celebrated young girl and left it as a mature young woman.

1.9 Helgoland, Blessed Helgoland

To fully recover from the two operations, my parents took me to Ober-Schlema, Germany, where we spent a few weeks. Unexpectedly, but as if it had meant to be, I saw and heard Hitler for the first time. This was on March 26, 1936. In his speech he talked about honour, freedom and peace and made proposals to foreign countries. The crowd was exuberant and there was excitement. But the most important thing was that it gave every one hope. It was an emotional gathering.

A few days later I went to Prague for a short visit and then returned to the Netherlands. There I finally decided to study zoology. But first I wanted to go abroad, and then decide what further to do. I knew only that I wanted to work hard—that was my purpose. I applied to the Institute of Bird Research in Helgoland under Dr. Hagmeier, as well as to the Institute of Marine Biology under Dr. von Buddenbröck. To my great joy I was accepted, and in August I saw this *Holy Land* for the first time. Wonderful Helgoland, with its highland and lowland, its storms and fishermen—seemed like part of

the long-lost Atlantis. What an island, what cosmic powers, this sanctuary—Helgoland! A time I will never forget.

Our marine-biology class consisted of 23 students from German and Austrian universities. I was the only student from the Netherlands. The course of study was interesting but very difficult.

Helgoland was famous for its bird observatory, the *Vogelwarte.* This was of special interest to me. Thousands of birds visit this island to rest on their flight to the south. Our task was to rescue birds that were caught in nets and bring them to the institute for examination, before setting them free. It was a very interesting job. Professor Dr. Drost was my teacher. One day I consulted him about my future. I had begun to realise that animal psychology was my special area of interest. This was a brand new field of research pioneered by Professor Konrad Lorenz, my idol. I had already read all of his books, and my question for Dr. Drost was: Where could I go to study this subject? I wanted to know if he could introduce me somewhere, perhaps abroad. Professor Drost thought about it for a while, and after I took an exam he told me that the best teacher he could think of was Dr. Bierens de Haan in the Netherlands. He worked at Artis, the Amsterdam zoo, and since he had made quite a name for himself, I would be lucky to be accepted to work for him. In a way, though, I was a little disappointed, because I had hoped to be able to go to some foreign country.

Nevertheless, I thanked Professor Drost for his recommendation. Shortly thereafter I took my leave and returned to the Netherlands. Since I had worked on this wonderful island for such a long time, it was hard to say my farewells. Helgoland had become holy to me. It is a cosmic island, solitary amid the stormy sea, a part of the lost Atlantis. Never will I forget Helgoland. Here one gathers new strength. It stole my heart.

Red cliffs, white sand, green land,
these are the colours of the flag of
Helgoland

1.10 My Research at Artis, the Amsterdam Zoo

Dr. Bierens de Haan had his study and small laboratory on the first floor of the so-called Marten House at Artis. Outside, wolves were kept in cages. I had announced my arrival, so the professor was waiting for me in his room. He sat behind his desk, with a chair close by for me to sit on. He looked at me with his big eyes, serious, but with a flicker of amusement. His hair was combed over the top of his balding head. He asked me how I thought that he could be of service. I was nervous at first, but then managed to tell him about my studies, ending by asking him if he would be willing to take me on as his assistant. I told him that I had received his address from Dr. Drost in Helgoland. I was accepted and could start the following Monday. But he expected me to be punctual and meet him for lunch at the Artis restaurant every day, where he dined with the other professors, talking about work-related questions or problems. It was a great honour for me to be able to meet some of these famous researchers. Overjoyed, I drove home that night to tell my parents about this success.

On Monday morning I arrived punctually at Dr. Bierens de Haan's office. I already had found out enough about my new teacher not to upset him with mistakes. He quickly informed me about a little laboratory on the second floor, which from now on was to be my domain. He also told me about three cages with Lampong monkeys in that room My task was to study the intelligence and eating habits of these animals. He showed me his collection of books and offered to lend them to me to the extent that I had not already read them. These books were sacred to him, and he warned me not to put spots or wrinkles on the pages. I promised to take good care of them. He handed me ten books, which I was allowed to take to my room. There I found a table and a chair, which was all I needed to get started. At noon Dr. Bierens de Haan would ring a bell, and I was to come downstairs immediately.

As soon as I was alone in my room, I looked at the monkeys, somewhat vacuously. I realised that I was expected to do a good job, but as yet had no idea how to tackle the matter. I started looking at the wonderful books, and before I knew it the bell rang and I had to go downstairs. I quickly pushed the chair under the table and made sure the desk was in order. I wanted to make a good impression, and after everything was properly organised I went to the restaurant with my boss. He was fond of mountain climbing, and even in the flat Dutch countryside he always took his thick cane with him. He walked briskly, with a long stride. It was not easy to keep up with him. Dr. Bierens de Haan seemed to me like a typical, somewhat spoiled bachelor. He was about 50 years old and, like the rest of his family, highly intelligent. He was an art connoisseur, and he especially loved castles and old monuments. At the restaurant I was introduced to the *other* teachers, and everything went smoothly.

Satisfied with our acquaintance, we both went back to work. The doctor went immediately to his office, and I walked upstairs, not suspecting that anything bad had happened. I opened the door to my room and... what was this?! My chair stood against one of the cages, the table was overturned, and all the valuable books were on the bottom of the cages. The monkeys had grabbed the books through the wire mesh and acted as though they had been reading books their entire life. Some of them were scribbling in the books with my pencils, and some were tearing one page out after the other. One of the monkeys must have been able to reach the chair and pull the table towards the cages. Wasn't this real intelligence?

I froze dead in my tracks. My God, what was I to do now? On first impulse, I ran to Dr. Bierens de Haan's office, screaming: "Oh please, you must come upstairs with me. Something terrible has happened." He ran up the stairs, taking two steps at a time. He saw the disaster and could think of nothing else but to open the cages and rescue the last of his sacred books. This was the worst thing he could have done. The monkeys were much too proud of their new possessions to give any of them up. Immediately one of the monkeys jumped on his head, one on his shoulders and quickly grabbed the lock to the cages from the doctor and put it in his mouth. Sceptically

he watched this strange man inside his cage, oblivious to the fact that this person was a zoology professor.

I realised the situation was getting out of hand and ran downstairs to get the guard, who, thank God, was close by. I told him about the drama unfolding, and he ran upstairs. He looked the situation over. Knowing how to handle the monkeys, he coaxed them slyly back into their cages, quickly retrieving the lock from the monkey's mouth. But the damage... I was really distressed over it all.

My boss went back downstairs, and here I was, alone in the middle of this disaster area. The valuable books were badly damaged. Pencils, papers—everything was dirty, destroyed and torn apart. I heard the professor leave the building to go home and since in the meantime it had got very late, I decided to go home as well.

For a whole week the professor did not pay any attention to me. Even the lunches had been cancelled. I didn't know how to act, and even though I gave him my sincere apologies, he hardly listened to me. The following Monday I was ordered to the professor's office. When I walked in, I saw all the damaged books stacked up on the desk in front of him. Minutes seemed like hours, until our eyes met and the professor looked at me with piercing eyes. Suddenly he started laughing. Dr. Bierens de Haan, the always-so-serious professor, exploded with laughter. I was so surprised, that I just stared at him for a minute. But then I couldn't help myself, but joined in the laughter.

We both sat there for about ten minutes, laughing so hard that the tears ran down our faces. He said: "Miss Heubel, I have never seen anything like this in my entire life. One monkey on my head, the other on my shoulder. I was sweating out of fear and was so relieved when the guard came and took charge of the situation. What do I care about the books anymore! This was a performance I shall never forget as long as I live. And I'm telling you, I will cherish this wonderful act forever. How excellent—what a comical farce!"

Chapter Two

Viewing the World

And Travelling to the Dutch East Indies

2.1 The Rise of National Socialism

After World War I, Germany experienced a time of despair. Food rations were limited due to the British embargo, which caused people to suffer from hunger throughout the country. All over Germany, Anarchist and Communist groups formed, trying to seize power. In the Baltic States, German soldiers under Albert Leo Schlageter, with aid and weapons supplied by the British government stopped a Bolshevik invasion. Finally, Friedrich Ebert, with help from patriotic militias called *Freikorps,* restored order in Germany. In Munich, however, a Communist group, led by the Jew Kurt Eisner, seized power in a bloody coup. Police officials stepped in and managed to crush them.

At this time Adolf Hitler, with the help of German officers, managed to gather about him a group of determined young people. With their ideology they refuted the lies spread by the Communists. Hitler was able to enlist General Ludendorff in his cause. He wanted to march with hundreds of people to the *Feldherrnhalle* in Munich to demonstrate on the9th of November 1923. This was not in the interest of the newly formed Bavarian government, however. The demonstrators were held up by government troops, and sixteen demonstrators were shot dead. This demonstration was considered a *coup d' état,* and Hitler, as well as Rudolf Hess and many others, were convicted and sentenced to serve time at the prison in Landsberg am

Lech. During this time he wrote the book *Mein Kampf,* which became the basis for National Socialism.

After his release, Hitler continued the fight to free Germany from Jewish Capitalism and Communism. National Socialism quickly gained popularity, after the great inflation in 1923 had robbed many middle- and upper-class people of their possessions. During this inflation one had to pay millions—and later even billions—for a loaf of bread. Because he was an Austrian, Hitler had to be recognised as a German before he could become Germany's new leader. (He had already received Bavarian nationality when he volunteered for the Bavarian forces during the First World War.) Since the influence of the National Socialists had grown by the year 1930, they acquired one-third of the seats in the *Reichstag.* Through this success Hitler became eligible to apply for German citizenship. Between 1930 and 1933, elections were held in many German states, with one government after another declaring its resignation. They no longer found it possible to govern.

Field Marshal von Hindenburg, meanwhile, was elected *Reichspresident.* He feared that within a short period of time Germany would become ungovernable. He then called on Franz von Papen, who belonged to his close circle of advisors. Von Papen managed to assemble many important people, among them Hugenberg, to form a new cabinet. But Hitler's NSDAP (National Socialist German Workers' Party) had grown so enormously that Germany could no longer be governed without it. Finally, on January 30, 1933, Hitler was elected *Reichskanzler,* with von Papen as his Vice-Chancellor. In March new elections were held, which gave Hitler an enormous plurality, strengthening his conviction that he could only be Chancellor if the German people gave him their support in overwhelming numbers. Hitler was now reaffirmed as Chancellor, and Hindenburg officially declared Hitler *Reichskanzler* at the Garrison Church in Potsdam on March 21,1933.

2.2 From an All-Netherlandish Movement to Germanic Unity

- In the year 1929 the Flemish activist, Dr. August Borms, who was serving a long prison sentence for his involvement in the Flemish movement during the First World War, was released. At a great gathering in the Bellevue building in Amsterdam he was honoured for his devotion to keeping the Netherlandish language and culture alive. Renowned individuals, such as Henriëtte Roland Hoist-van der Schalk and the Flemish poet Rene de Clercq gave a speech in his honour. At the end of this emotional gathering the visitors started leaving, while singing, "*Hang op, hang op aan de lantaarn, weg met defranskiljons*" (Hang them, hang them from the lampposts, away with the Frenchifiers.) At this time it was still possible for the very Communistic Henriette Roland Hoist to honour the very nationalistic Dr. Borms. After the rise of National Socialism this became impossible, because Communism was now fiercely opposed. The struggle for a new Greater Netherlands, or *Groot Diets/and,* was not only being fought in Europe, but also in South Africa, where there is also a nation of Netherlandish, or *Diets,* descent, called the Afrikaners. The rebirth of a new *Groot Dietsland* occurred not only here in the Netherlands, but also in the south on the so-called black continent There a nation lives that also has the right to the honour-able name of "Dietsers".

Who does not know the name of Paul Kruger? Paul Kruger was born on October 10, 1825, in Bulhoek, South Africa and died on July 14, 1904, in Clarens, Switzerland. He was called "Oom Kruger" Uncle Kruger). In the year 1836, when he was eleven years old, he *and* his parents were part of a great trek to the north across the Vaal River. Paul Kruger grew up during the wars with the Bantu. Even though he only had three months of classroom education, he became one of our greatest leaders.

At forty years of age Kruger became general commander of the troops of the Transvaal, which fought along with the Oranje Vrijstaat (Orange Free State) against the Basuto. In 1875 the British wanted to conquer the Transvaal, which led to the first War for Freedom (1880-1881). Then in the year 1886 the first gold mines at Witwatersrand were discovered. The British demanded more and more mining concessions. This led to the Second Boer War. To seek aid for his desperate country, the now 75-year-old President Kruger travelled to Europe in the year 1900. He was received enthusiastically throughout Europe, but neither France nor Germany was willing to give any meaningful aid to the Transvaal.

At the end of the 1920s a number of small political parties were formed in the Netherlands. There was, for example, the *Fascistenbond* (Fascist Union) under Baars, the *Verbond van Nationalisten* (Union of Nationalists), under van der Mijle and van Eysden, the only royally approved fascist party in the Netherlands, and last but not least the so-called *Zwarte Front* (Black Front) under Arnold Meyer. One of his slogans was:

'It might be untrue to say that all anti-fascists an rabble, but it is a fact that all rabble are anti-fascist."

These were all small groups that did not attract any significant following. There remained a desire to form a large fascist party in the Netherlands.

On December 14, 1931, Anton Mussert and Cornelius van Geelkerken formed the *Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging* (National Socialist Movement), the NSB. Mussert had already made a name for himself in 1927, when he took up action against the Dutch-Belgian Treaty, which would have been very much against the national interest and could, in fact, have hurt the country badly. A gathering of intellectuals formed around this action committee, in which Mussert functioned as secretary. These intellectuals not only agreed with Mussert, but were also willing to work toward a national rebirth. Among these were Dr. van Vessem and Dr. van Genechten. The individuals who joined the NSB in its early stages had already proved themselves capable of successful action. Theirs was the slogan, "Trust in God, Love for Your People and Country, and Honour Labour." In its first year the NSB had about 1,000 members. By

1935, when Hitler had already started his regime, the NSB had grown into a major party, with over 10,000 members and eight percent of the Dutch voters.

On June 28, 1940, Anton Mussert delivered an address, called a *Haagespraak* (Hedge Speech), to a gathering of NSB members. In it he declared:

> *Our nationalism is made possible only by our people, the union of all Dutch-speaking people, wherever they may live; then by the union of all Germanic peo ple; and above that, the union of all European countries, through European solidarity. Healthy nationalism is not possible without healthy socialism. We do not mean the kind of class warfare that Marxism has shown us in the past. Our socialism is an act of fairness and equality. If Europe does not want to go down, it must separate itself from the British policy of a divided Europe. The Germanic nations must pull together to build a strong union of one race and one blood Germany, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands.*

Within the NSB a group was formed, called the *Jeugdstorm* (Youth Storm). It was not "neutral", but visibly nationalist, and wanted to instil in our youth a feeling of nationalism, love of country and devotion to their own kind. As members, we wanted to serve the country with honour and camaraderie, with order and discipline. Our slogan was, "With Trust in God, All for Our Fatherland". Officially the *Jeugdstorm* stayed out of politics, but the links between the *Jeugdstorm* and the NSB caused the outside world to look at it as just another fascist youth movement. We had regular meetings, which were held on the Goudsberg in Lunteren, in the centre of the Netherlands. This meeting place was given to the NSB by a wealthy family by the name of Nieuwenkamp. We often invited the public to our gatherings. Speeches were given by Dr. M.M. Rost van Tonningen, Geelkerken, Mussert and Count de Marchant et d'Ansembourg. Many traditional dresses and costumes were worn at these events. Visitors went away from the *Haagespraak* with the impression of having witnessed an unforgettable event.

2.3 The Crucial Year: 1933

- Germany: Adolf Hitler comes to power on January 30
- United States: Franklin D. Roosevelt takes office as President
- Netherlands: Mutiny on a warship in the East Indies

Mutiny on a Dutch warship? Was that significant? Was that a world-shattering event? Was that important, compared to the rise to power of Hitler and Roosevelt? One of them came from a country that had lost a terrible world war, the other from a victorious land of unlimited opportunity. Germany had been defeated at Versailles, was robbed, bled dry and on the verge of civil war. In America industry was grinding to a halt, the middle class was being bankrupted, farmers were being impoverished. The year 1933: hopeless darkness spread over Europe and the whole world. It was a time of despair, with a disruption of social life as never before. Unemployed men and women everywhere, millions were searching for work. Poverty, hunger and depression spread throughout the nation. Thus was the spring of 1933.

In this time of disaster a bomb—literally speaking—exploded. A bomb dropped out of a small military plane onto the largest Dutch warship on the high seas. A small plane, one pilot, one bomb and one hit that destroyed everything. It completely shattered the ship! Many died. In Washington and in London, but especially in Tokyo, the experts called for closed-door meetings. The unthinkable had happened. Sea strategies and marine plans had to be discarded. They had to start all over from the beginning. The aeroplane turned out to be of greater significance than anyone had dared to imagine. Smaller ships needed additional protection and modern electronic equipment. The danger from the air was deadly! All the world powers looked upon the attack on the Dutch vessel as something extraordinary. America and Europe recognised the Pacific Ocean as a new

arena, where the most modern and electronically advanced ships would collide in battle.

The main powers in the Far East were:

- ***England (with** *Malaysia, British* **Borneo, British India)***
- ***France (Indo-China)***
- ***United** States **(the Philippines)***
- ***Holland (Indonesia)***

And it should not be forgotten that after 1918 the Western allies had, without thought, pushed the Germans out of these areas. Under the treaty of Versailles the German possessions in the South Pacific came under Japanese dominion—the same Japanese who had seen their advantage in 1914, the first year of the war, and moved into the German colonies in China.

Japan had been in deep sleep until 1864, in which year it was opened up to Western capitalism. They learned the modern techniques of the West—and they learned fast, *very* fast. The growth of their country was enormous. Japanese industry became very strong. Japan kept searching for more and more living space for its people, as well as markets for its products.

The Japanese needed less than half a century to become a world superpower. First they conquered Formosa (Taiwan), near the Chinese coast. Then they moved forward to capture all of Korea. Then there was a war against the Russian Bear, which was defeated, and the island of Sakhalin became Japanese. This was most terrifying, since it was the first time that they had defeated a "white" superpower. Their next advance came in Manchuria, and immediately afterward the whole of northern China was under attack. European and American prestige was strongly hurt by these actions. By 1933 the Japanese were the most feared enemy of these colonial powers. Japan had become a military power to be reckoned with.

And what was Holland doing in the region? Holland did nothing! Worse still, Holland lowered its military budget year after year. In 1926 the Dutch budget for defence was still 120 million guilders. By 1934 it stood at only 88 million. In 1933 the Japanese threat took a dramatic turn. How does one defend a large archipelago like the

Dutch East Indies? With a large fleet, of course, but this was something we no longer had. Every successive Dutch government had lowered its military expenses. Fewer and fewer Dutch warships were being sent to the Far East. We were aware of the "Yellow Threat". We had become vulnerable. We had allowed our defences to go downhill.

But why was our government so naive? Our government had always got along well with Britain, and now Britain was building a great navy. It was already large, but now even more battleships were being built. Singapore became the place where this unimaginably large and undefeatable fleet was being stationed. Never before had there been such an enormous protective force in the world. The following became clear: England would act in defence of Dutch interests in the Far East. It is known that England never showed much concern for other countries, but it certainly did not want the Japanese to dominate the Far East, and particularly not the East Indies. But Holland, in its turn, would not provide any military funding for its colonies. Thus it could spend its money to strengthen its border against any moves by German troops. That's why the Dutch did not bother to build warships: they preferred to spend their money at home. Holland was getting itself ready for an attack from Hitler's Germany.

2.4 Our Voyage to the Dutch East Indies

Something very special happened at our home. My parents decided to take a trip to the Dutch East Indies. Mother's wish was to visit my oldest brother Dolf, his wife Tine and their three children, Dolfje, Florrie and Eef. This was a surprise to all of us. Never before had something been planned so carefully and so far in advance. But this fantastically planned trip had another purpose as well. My father was concerned about his heir to the company. He had given my brother Wim a very good education, so he could make him

co-partner in his banking house, Kol & Co. This was not meant to be in vain. My father had worked too hard for that. Wim had already spent a year in America, gathering more experience there. Now he worked at the firm, something much welcomed by Uncle Eef Kol. In my father's opinion, however, he was too much involved in the extraordinary changes in Germany, and even more by our involvement in the *Jeugdstorm.* My father feared that my brother would accordingly lose interest in the company. And rightly so, because in our minds we saw what was really important. We took an interest in the history-making events of those days. What were these events?

- The Saarland proclamation, August 1934
- The speech of Minister Darré at the Harvest Thanksgiving Fes tival (not to be confused with the American Thanksgiving, which is quite different)
- The historic visit of Anthony Eden and Sir John Simon with Hitler
- The historic meeting between Hitler and Mussolini in 1934
- Hitler at his New Year's celebration in conversation with French Foreign Minister François Poncet
- Hitler's meeting with Polish Foreign Minister Beck
- British veterans visiting Hitler
- The reception of the Japanese marine corps in Berlin
- The day of mourning upon Hindenburg's death in 1934, with memorial services at the Berlin Opera and the Tannenberg Me morial
- The Harvest Thanksgiving in Goslar, were Wim and I honoured our grandparents and ancestors
- The Labour Day celebration in the Berlin *Lustgarten,* where the *Führer,* Adolf Hitler, gave his speech to the youth of the country
- The 1935 *Reichsparteitag* in Nuremberg with Dr. Ley
- The introduction of the Reich Labour Service
- The excitement of farmers everywhere
- The festival at Bayreuth, were Wagner's operas were performed

- The opening of the architecturally wonderful House of German Art in Munich
- The construction of the *Autobahnen* under the supervision of Dr. Fritz Todt
- The grand expansion of the *SS* and the SA
- The Berlin Olympics in 1936, captured so splendidly on film by Leni Riefenstahl

Could my father really be upset because of our excitement? After all, he felt no less excited himself.

My father was now at an age where he had to start thinking about his retirement. My brother Wim was allowed to go with him to the Indies, but had to promise, as an act of gratitude, to become seriously committed to the company upon his return. This my brother promised. Since I wanted to go with them as well, I went to Dr. Bierens de Haan and Portielje, to ask if they had some business to take care of in the Dutch East Indies, and if so could I do it for them. This worked out well. I was to work at the Botanical Garden in Batavia under Prof. Docters van Leeuwen and additionally had to develop a plan for the Artis' livestock.

Thus, my parents, brother and I left on our trip on October 21, 1938. We departed Hilversum at noon to embark on the *Gneisenau* the following day. It was the newest dream ship, with a wonderful interior. Later it was converted to a warship. As soon as we left the harbour in Antwerp, a strong storm developed, no less formidable than those notorious storms in the Bay of Biscay. Everyone was very seasick, and on top of it all, my father became claustrophobic and fell very ill. A doctor had to be called. After looking at my father, he insisted that he leave the ship as soon as possible, if we didn't want him to die. Such cases did not occur very often, but the patient could die within a week. My mother decided that, even though Dolf and Tine would be greatly disappointed and despite the additional expense, my parents would get off in Genoa, but Wim and I would complete the voyage. My father, overjoyed to have solid ground under his feet once again, recovered almost immediately. My mother, however, was very sad. How much she had been looking forward to this trip. But it was all over for her now.

Since we had a layover in Genoa that lasted several days, Wim and I had made an appointment with the Italian Youth organisation, the *Balilla,* before we left Holland. We were invited to their meeting, to witness Mussolini's speech at the Palazzo Verdi in Rome. We were officially welcomed, but the Italian youth were so overwhelmed by the way we looked with our red hair and Germanic faces, that it took a while until order could be restored. We were actually asked to leave for a little while, until things calmed down. Then we were allowed back in. Thus was the typically Italian temperament. After a while, we were ready to go back on board to continue our trip.

On the 14th of November we finally reached the harbour of Batavia. Tine and her little son Dolfje were there to pick us up. How happy we were to see them! Batavia (now Jakarta) was very spread out, with little houses surrounded by gardens. We visited the older part of town, with its fish markets and the old harbour. Then we went to the Hotel Des Indes, the largest in all of Batavia, where we took part in the traditional rice buffet. On the following day, we continued our trip to Tanjung Karang on southern Sumatra, where my brother Dolf lived. There he was *the* advisor for various cultures to many of the leading companies. They were mostly rubber and coffee plantations, but also timber companies and the wonderful tea plantations farther up towards Lake Toba and Medan. These plantations were all situated in the middle of the jungle.

The road to Tanjung Karang had the most beautiful palm trees and little creeks, along with the loveliest little houses. My brother had put up a flag for us—what a welcome. All the families of Tanjung Karang came over that night, and we drank and celebrated.

Dolf showed us the different plantations, and we were taken on an excursion to a rubber factory. There were many other crops, such as rice, peppers and bananas. I had a chance to catch a small tiger cub at the plantation—my first present for Artis. Everywhere we could hear gibbon monkeys in the trees, and the forest was further inhabited by lizards, snakes and beautiful butterflies. Another plantation had mostly coffee plants.

On the 30th of November, My brother Wim and I embarked for our return to Batavia. There I had an appointment with the director of the aquarium, to discuss the transport of sea animals to Artis.

Then we drove to the clubhouse of the Dutch East Indian *Jeugdstorm.* The NJS over here was in excellent spirit. We got the impression that everything was being done parallel to our *Jeugdstorm* in the Netherlands.

On December 2 we started our tour of Java with a three-hour train ride to Bandung. We went through flat land, rice plantations, hills and mountains—all very beautiful. Our first visit was with the leader of the NSB in the Indies. We had an open discussion about all local issues. In the beginning everyone could become a member, regardless of race. But this caused problems later on. Then we visited Governor Stephan of the NJS, who had leadership over the entire East Indian *Jeugdstorm.* The governor, of Javanese descent himself, was a man completely devoted to his task. But still he was unsure how to resolve these problems caused by race. The East Indian NJS consisted mainly of Dutch-Javanese children, who spoke Malay and had great difficulty with the Dutch language. He, like most of the people he worked with, felt himself as a Dutch NSB member. He rightfully complained about the fact that the communication between Holland and the Indies was not as good as it should have been. His biggest problem, however, was a lack of competent leaders.

After this meeting, I had a work-related visit with the director of the local zoo. Bandung is a large city with lots of flower gardens with many fragrant roses and dahlias, a rarity in the Indies. Temperature here was nice, but it was cool enough to wear a jacket, and a woollen blanket was needed. Our trip now led us through large rice plantations. In the distance the mountains were surrounded by fog in the early morning light. There were water buffalo walking about, and swarms of birds could be seen over the plantations. Next we visited the world-famous Borobudur, the largest and most beautiful Hindu construction of Java. The following days we visited many Hindu and Brahman temples. We came past the old palaces of the Sultan of Jokya.

Then we took a boat to Bali. The people on Bali look much different than the Javanese. Their faces are wider, and men as well as women have much stronger-looking bodies. Everybody wears flowers in his or her hair. The women, no matter if they are young or old,

walk around with bare breasts. They carry large baskets on top of their heads. This is how they maintain their beautiful posture. Bali has countless Hindu temples, one more beautiful than the other. In front of our hotel was a platform where dances were performed. How different from the Javanese dances these were! Their music has so much rhythm, exhilarating and wonderful. I had an old acquaintance who had lived on Bali for ten years. Through her we had access to all kinds of different places. Then we returned to the steamboat to travel back to Java once again.

2.5 The National Youth Movement in the East

Influenced by events in Europe, especially the successes of Mussolini and Hitler, the Dutch had formed their first fascist parties in the East Indies in 1933. In November of 1933 Mussert gave the order to establish the NSB in the Dutch East Indies. After a short while many people, from Sumatra to the farthest corner of Dutch New Guinea, joined the NSB, But still, it could hardly be called an organisation yet. That did not occur until the year 1935, when Mussert himself came to the East to set up guidelines for the NSB. He wanted the overseas group to co-operate with the movement in Holland. Comradeship, discipline and a sense of unity were its main ideals.

Holland received much support from NSB groups in the colonies. The Netherlands needed this kind of support. It was wonderful to witness the excitement for the NSB in the Dutch East Indies. One must remember that the climate there is very humid and tropical. Our comrades there worked very hard and intensely, compared to our working hours in the cool climate of Holland. After war broke out with Germany, the NSB ran into difficulty, even in the Indies. All NSB members were imprisoned in barracks, old prisons and forts like the malaria-infested and greatly feared Fort Ngawi. This used to be a penal colony for rebellious soldiers and convicts, and was ex-

tremely primitive. These NSB members, who had always honoured their Queen, were now treated like the worst traitors!

On December 27 the entire Dutch East Indian *Jeugdstorm* received Wim and me in our Dutch uniforms. This took place in Sukabumi on a large campground with a clubhouse in the middle. After our introduction we staged a large march through the city. Wim and I, being guests of honour, walked up front, followed by the standard-bearers, along with long ranks of uniformed NJS members. After the march the governor gave an emotional speech. He officially welcomed us and told us how important contact between the organisation in the Netherlands and the NJS was, especially in view of all the different problems in the Dutch East Indies. Ninety percent of the youth members here were of mixed race, though all were staunch Royalists and much attached to Holland.

In the evening we watched a film about the Papuans of Dutch New Guinea, made by Comrade Harting himself. The leading woman spoke about the goals and principles of our *Jeugdstorm* and then introduced our movement's song. Now it was Wim's turn to show his film about our marches, demonstrations and gatherings at the Goudsberg in Lunteren. The film was a great success.

Finally we showed a film about the *Bund Deutscher Mödel* and the *Hitlerjugend,* which we had brought with us. The evening was concluded by a speech of the governor who reminded us that the most important things in the *jeugdstorm* were order and discipline, which had to be respected if men and women were to be good patriots later on. My brother and I received an impressive spear as a present in remembrance of the NJS in Sukabumi. Finally, I had the great honour of lowering the flag.

After a most interesting voyage with many experiences, we celebrated Christmas with my brother's family. From our hotel window we had a spectacular view over Wijnkoop Bay and the huge horseshoe-shaped Gedeh Crater. In the central hall was a beautiful Christmas tree full of lights. As I sat under the tree, my thoughts went back to all the new and exciting things we had seen on our trip through this wonderful country, with its reverence for life and death, its deep mystic feeling. This reminded me of a passage in Rosenberg's *Myth of the Twentieth Century,* which I had read during my ill-

ness. It fascinated me so much that I would like to recite from it at this point:

The European finds in India the land of his dreams. Amidst a time of technological dehumanisation, not the worst of them submerged themselves into the thoughts of Yajnvalkya and Cankara, were enchanted by the heroic Rama, the God Krishna, the poet Kalidasa! This resulted in these India-seekers preaching the salvation of Europe through Old India, not realising that this Aryan India ultimately succumbed through the endlessly heart-expanding thoughts of the later Upanishads. Moreover, something else could be seen, which already had a world-political effect: The awakening of Indian nationalism through the national consciousness of the British. India became aware of the victorious national idea in Europe. Through all repression was awakened in many souls in bastardised India a sense of national self-consciousness in all aspects of life.

How true this was, not only of British India, but just as well of the Dutch East Indies!

2.6 In the Forests of Southern Sumatra

When we returned to Tanjung Karang, I was immediately invited on an elephant hunt. For me this was a first experience, just to venture out into the bush without a gun. Shortly before sundown we came upon a path that led right into the heart of the jungle. We walked for hours and saw many large and small tracks of elephants, boars and deer. The elephant droppings form great piles, which in the daytime are covered by beautiful butterflies. If the droppings are still warm, the elephant is near. Then... suddenly a herd of ten or twelve elephants appeared in the moonlight, right in front of us. After about ten minutes the elephants turned and walked away. It seemed to me as if I were in a zoo, though I quickly realised this was not so.

One evening Dolf asked me if I would be willing to take a teaching position for six- and seven-year-old children of European employees at a local rubber plantation. I was to get my own house with a nice garden and a good income if I accepted. Because of the different working hours in the tropics, I was to work from seven till noon. I visited Mr. van Herwaarden, the supervisor of the plantation, and after a short conversation accepted the offer.

It was especially interesting for me to own a house in the middle of the jungle and to have enough free time in the afternoons to go for long walks and to explore. The paths in this jungle were quite narrow, only between one and two metres wide. Since the vegetation on the sides of the path was very dense, wild animals also used these paths quite often. Confrontations were therefore sometimes inevitable.

One day as I was walking along, I heard a thundering noise that was followed by loud trumpeting sounds. It was a large elephant herd. I realised that I was in danger and did not have a choice but to hide in the bushes until they were gone. In my haste I got tangled up in thorn bushes and had to muster unbelievable patience to free myself, even though I heard the elephants coming closer and closer. Finally, as I was ready and hiding in an opening in the bushes, the elephants came thundering along the path. They stood still for a moment and then, luckily for me, went on their way. A similar incident occurred when I was following a tapir track, hoping to find some of these good-natured animals. I must have been careless, because all of a sudden I was about ten metres away from a large Malay bear. He immediately got ready to attack, which did not leave me any choice but to shoot him. One meter in front of me the animal fell to the ground, bleeding. Such things should not happen too often, as otherwise one would not explore a jungle for very long.

My time at the plantation had come to an end. Dr. Bartels, Dr. Franck and I had received an order to travel through all the nature reserves to shoot those animals which were sick. These trips were very exciting and interesting for me. I learned a lot about the jungle, the animals and also about myself. Never before did I have two men weave a hammock for me out of leaves and branches, in which I

slept like a queen. Because of all the wild animals, it was too dangerous to sleep on the ground.

Our first destination was the reserve for wild Banteng cows, whose bulls stay together in large herds. These animals were far from harmless. Shortly after our visit, another researcher was attacked by a bull and killed as the horns pierced through him. We did have to shoot a few bulls, because they had an infective bladder disease. On this trip I was surprised by twelve Javanese women, who approached me with their hands folded in a typical Indian greeting. Obviously, I was the first white woman they had ever seen. One woman lifted up my trouser leg to see if my legs were white as well. Paul, Max and I spent many unforgettable months travelling all over the country. We watched tapirs, elephants and even the rare black panther. Once in a while we had to shoot an animal.

This wonderful trip ended my time in the Dutch East Indies. Now it was time to go home. I had been accepted as the new director of the zoo in Bandung and was convinced that I would return in a couple of months. It was the year 1939. How very differently it all turned out. As a young student I couldn't have had any notion of how my life as a woman was about to change.

2.7 The Life of M.M Rost van Tonningen, LL.M.

Meinoud Marinus Rost van Tonningen was born on February 19, 1894, in Surabaya, Dutch East Indies. His father, Marinus Bernard Rost van Tonningen, was married to Meinouda van den Bosch in Surabaya. Marinus was an officer in the Dutch East Indian regiment, Meinoud was the youngest of three sons, Nico, Wim and Meinoud. He grew up at a time when his father was heading towards the high point of his military career. During this period his father took part in an expedition to the island of Lombok. His early youth and school days were a time of respect and loving admiration for his

father. He grew up in this wonderful land, which used to be our beloved Dutch East Indies.

He was a lively little guy. When he was about four years old, his mother used to put bright red socks on him, so she could see him even at a distance, as he was always going off. Meinoud was his mother's favourite, and she kept him with her longer than usual, because she could not stand the idea of having him leave to go to school in Holland like his brothers. It was bad enough that she had to send her first two sons away. Marinus, concerned about the health of his beloved wife, had no choice but to go along with her wishes. Completely devoted to his career, he could not spend much time with the education and training of his youngest son, anyway. Thus, little Meinoud was allowed to stay with his mother until his father officially retired from military service in 1909.

The little lad made many friends among the other children, and he was interested in everything around him. Nothing escaped his bright little eyes. As the guards paraded in front of his father, he felt like a little general himself. One day he told the commander of the guards that his father had given the order that the guards were to present themselves. The man did as the little guy had told him. When his father came home, he was astonished to hear what his little son had done. Of course, he was duly chastised for this.

In primary as well as in secondary school, Meinoud was an outstanding and intelligent student, always dutifully finishing his homework before going out to play. He excelled at everything, including sports. He joined a gymnastics club, and his active mind caused him to take part in all kinds of activities. If, in spite of his best efforts, he did not get results, he lost all interest. He experienced the glory of his father's expedition to Lombok and the forceful ending of the Atyeh war on Sumatra. In short, he experienced all of his father's actions and excitements—even the campaign on Bali, where the native nobility was brought to calamitous ruin, because the Dutch government had disregarded his father's advice.

At the age of fifteen, Meinoud returned permanently to Holland with his parents. It was not easy to adjust. The freedom that he had experienced in the Dutch East Indies was very different from the strict secondary school regime in Holland, the curriculum not at all

corresponding to his previous education. The entire family had to live on a rather meagre pension, and the education of his two older brothers had to be financed as well. Meinoud found life in Holland rather oppressive. One day Mother came home to find the two rascals Meinoud and Nico playing seesaw on a plank jutting out of a window on the top floor. Her heart almost stopped. She ran up the stairs, grabbed Nico, and then cautiously coaxed Meinoud to come inside. As a reprisal for their mother's agony, they both got a severe spanking.

Father Rost van Tonningen was determined that his youngest son should go and study in Delft at Holland's major institute of technology. Meinoud himself would have preferred the University of Leiden, but had to obey his father's wishes. He studied in Delft from 1912 to 1914, at the same time becoming chairman of the Technological Society. One of his favourite sports was rowing. He often participated in boat races and won many awards and trophies.

Meinoud was well respected by all, and his fellow club members were very fond of him. After his first engineering exam, he left Delft and applied for the University of Leiden, much to his father's displeasure. His mentor, Prof. ter Meulen, was also saddened by his leaving and would have liked to have kept this talented student in Delft. But he respected his decision, because Meinoud had told him that he planned to become a diplomat. In Leiden Meinoud accomplished his goals within a short period. He received his doctorate with the support and encouragement of his mentor, Professor van Eysinga, who remained an anchor in later years.

Meinoud was an officer during the period of the First World War, from 1914 to 1918, at which time Holland remained neutral. He loved being a soldier. Even later, when it was announced that NSB members had to leave the force, he refused to do so for as long as he could.

In the summer of 1921 he got a job at the Permanent Court of International Law in The Hague. From this position he tried to secure a place in the financial-economic section of the Secretariat of the League of Nations in Geneva. He began his successful career at the League of Nations as a trainee at the International Labour Office in Geneva. In 1923 he became an assistant of the General Commis-

sioner for the League of Nations in Vienna, Dr. A. R. Zimmermann, the former mayor of Rotterdam. It was his goal to help Austria recover from the war.

Never before had Rost van Tonningen met anyone who roundly declared himself to be anti-Semitic. Dr. Zimmermann taught Rost van Tonningen about the highly reprehensible actions of Jewish speculators. One example was the speculation against the French franc and its subsequent collapse in 1924, followed by the great panic on the Vienna stock market.

In 1926 Dr. Zimmermann resigned, and Rost van Tonningen took over his work until he returned to the Netherlands in 1928. Rost van Tonningen went to work as an assistant of the renowned banker, ter Meulen, at the bank of Hope & Co. This company had been founded in 1763 by the Scottish bankers, Thomas and Adrien Hope. At the end of the 18th century it financed state loans to several Continental powers, among them Russia.

Mr. ter Meulen was the preeminent Dutch professional in international finance. He was also the Dutch delegate for the financial committee of the League of Nations. Then the crash on Wall Street triggered a global depression, causing the closure of Vienna's largest bank, the *Osterreichische Kreditanstalt.* Hope & Co. maintained close business relations with this bank.

In consultation with ter Meulen, Rost van Tonningen decided to accept an invitation by the League of Nations to return to Vienna to report on the situation. In the fall of 1931 he was appointed General Commissioner for the League of Nations in Vienna, with a mandate to restore the Austrian economy. The first effort had been unsuccessful, due to hyperinflation. The second attempt began under even worse circumstances. Because of the closing of the largest bank in Austria, not just other banks but the Austrian State itself was threatened with bankruptcy. But with newly created international credit, the Austrian national debt could be consolidated.

Rost van Tonningen managed to establish a close working relationship with the Austrian Chancellor, Dollfuss. He also realised that a good relationship with the Germans was of major importance. When Sir Eric Phipps became British envoy to Vienna in 1933, Rost van Tonningen, after consultation with Dollfuss, accepted an invita-

tion by him to try to arrange a meeting with Hitler the following year. He wanted to come to an understanding between the two German states and find a way to end antagonism. At a private dinner at Phipps' house, he had a conversation with the German Minister of Foreign Affairs, von Neurath. The latter declined to arrange a personal appointment with Hitler, however, because he considered the idea doomed to failure from the start.

One year later Rost van Tonningen, at the request of Dolfuss, went to Berlin once again. There, at the home of von Neurath, he happened to meet the leader of the Austrian National Socialist Party, Baron von Wachter. He was ready to negotiate with Dollfuss, but on condition that his party would get two seats in government. Von Wachter told Rost van Tonningen that every effort to bring National Socialists to the gallows would result in reciprocal terror against the Austrian ministers. But this message did not yield any positive results. Dollfuss continued to terrorise the Austrian National Socialists, and Rost van Tonningen withdrew from the tragic conflict.

In July 1934 Dollfuss was assassinated. Two National Socialists were tried and hanged for the killing. Rost van Tonningen decided that from now on he would do everything in his power to better relations between the two states. He succeeded in 1936, when Austrian Chancellor Schuschnigg was forced to come to an arrangement with Hitler, accepting two National Socialists in his government.

Influenced by events in Austria, Rost van Tonningen was so impressed with the cogency of National Socialism, that he grew more and more inclined to become a member of this movement. The major event which finally made him give up on the idea of the League of Nations was the civil war that broke out in Spain in 1936—where the most appalling atrocities were committed by the Communists—and the decision to make the Soviet Union a member of the League of Nations. Before his return to the Netherlands he managed to meet with Hitler at Berchtesgaden. He discovered that Hitler shared his views on the economy. This finally convinced him to become a National Socialist. Meanwhile the financial situation in Austria had improved, and Rost van Tonningen returned to the Netherlands in September 1936.

The following is an original letter that Rost van Tonningen wrote to Mussert on September 13,1936:

Leader,

During my last week in Vienna, the distance between the Austrian government and myself grew rapidly, mainly because my decision to have was taken so abruptly that I annoyed a lot of people. The diplomats were confused and embarrassed because of me. They continued to invite me, but only en famille, so as not to embarrass the Austrian government. Only my Polish, German and Italian friends stood by me. On my last day — it was the day before yesterday — I said my goodbyes to the French envoy. He reproached me bitterly, "Vous avez fait le jeu de l'Allemagne" *(You played the Germans' game). I denied these unjust accusations. He also told me that Scbuschnigg was deeply insulted by my letter of resignation. Even though I had two lengthy conversations with Schuschnigg in the last week, he did not have the courage to accuse me of anything. On the contrary, he overflowed with friendliness. And also, my final visit with the Austrian president could only be described as normal. I only found out how angry the Austrians were about my joining the NSB, when none of the Austrian government representatives were present at the time of my departure.*

Arrival in Berlin. Comrade d'Ansembourg visited me in my room yesterday. Some of the Ribbentrop people had breakfast with us. He will probably talk to you about this.

A demonstration by the Hitlerjugend. Yesterday I sat with the Berlin diplomatic corps. It was said that some employees of the Dutch delegation had commented that they would rather see a victory of the Madrid bandits than the Spanish nationalists according to the motto, "Rather Communist than Fascist". This even offended the diplomats.

Reception by the SS yesterday evening. Here I met some important people. More about this when I meet with you personally. After this at 11 p.m. von Papen, with Secretary General of Foreign Affairs Dieckhoff and the German envoy in Bern, von Bibra. von Bibra was a legation consul in Prague for five years, where he was befriended by the Scottish secretary of the British legation, Hadow, who is also one of my best friends. He gave me a lot of information for our paper about correspondence from Prague.

Von Papen will try to talk with Hitler about matters that are of interest to us. I will send you notice through another channel.

SA and SS march this morning. Von Papen took me to the arena, where I sat with the government. Here I renewed my acquaintance with Count Schwerin von Krosigk, the German Finance minister, and got to meet Germany's best diplomat, Count Moltke, the ambassador in Warsaw. I had a long conversation with him. Then I drove to the parade and went to work.

I just got a call from van Maasdijk. I know his brother well Maasdijk is very anti-Nazi, but I will still meet with him. That will be better. He will know better than to write against us.

Tomorrow I will travel to Geneva, where the mood against me has reached a boiling point. I heard of the attacks planned against me from different sides. You should not be surprised if I defend myself in the press.

As I said, I will write you more by an indirect way.

With National Socialist greetings,

HOU Zee!

MM. *Rost van Tonningen*

The great distinction that Mr. M.M. Rost van Tonningen achieved in Austria was recognised by the Austrian government, which presented him upon his departure with the Grand Cross of the Austrian Order of Merit. His superiors at that time spoke about him with high esteem. For even the most difficult problems, he always found a satisfactory solution. His chief, Dr. Zimmermann, repeatedly praised him for this ability.

After Meinoud returned to the Netherlands, numerous papers proclaimed:

"A GREAT DUTCHMAN RETURNS TO THE NETHERLANDS"

A short while later these same newspapers wrote, tucked away on a back page:

"Mr. Rost van Tonningen, so we have learned, has become a member of the NSB."

In 1937 Meinoud asked his brother Wim to find out if Sir Henri Deterding would agree to help the NSB financially. Deterding was

the great figure responsible for the success of the Shell Oil Company. He was a staunch anti-Communist and even supported the German NSDAP financially in its fight against the Bolsheviks. Deterding had a brilliant mind. When he was asked why he was willing to help the German, but not the Dutch National Socialists, he replied: "The Germans are poor. Holland must first become poor. National Socialism will not get anywhere in a prosperous country."

Already in 1920 Deterding had predicted that Russia would annex Estonia. The issue at the time was the planned involvement of Shell in the shale-oil industry of that country. Deterding refused to invest money in these projects, because he already foresaw a Russian invasion. He did, however, support I.G. Farben. Unfortunately, all of this came to nought.

2.8 My Return to Holland

Before leaving Dutch East India in 1939 I had signed a labour contract with the Bandung Zoo, stipulating that I would take up work there only after a period of four months—during which time I wanted to travel to Holland via Japan—thus tactfully preparing my parents for my definite departure from Holland.

But, as often in life, man proposes but God disposes. Despite the fact that my journey to Japan had already been booked in advance, and I was to depart within a few weeks, I suddenly received notice that the ships had been requisitioned for refugees—Jews, that is. They wanted to disembark in Britain but were refused entry there, and thus the ships were left fully occupied.

In view of the general worsening situation I decided to re-route my journey and travel by car across Sumatra, to embark for Holland at Medan. Thus said, thus done.

After a fantastic journey I reached Medan, where I was welcomed with great cheer by the Ablij family, the local assistant-resident. Carried away by their enthusiasm, the whole reception got completely

out of hand. Escorted by my friends, I was finally brought on board the ship.

Just as I was happily waving goodbye to them and a sailor was throwing the hawser loose, to my great horror I saw my entire luggage still standing on the quay! Because of all the excitement I had not paid proper notice to it, and the servants had completely forgotten to carry it on board. How dreadful! I only had one small suitcase with me.

Soon rumour spread throughout the ship that a young lady, on her way to Holland, didn't have her luggage on board. And behold, within a few hours I received all kinds of clothes on loan from the other passengers: coats, underwear and, most importantly, evening gowns. There were festivities every evening, and the voyage was to take about three weeks.

But because my luggage had to be traced and forwarded to my home address in the Netherlands, my parents received notice about the incident. My brother Wim then decided to pick me up in Genoa.

He had become a close friend of Rost van Tonningen, who in turn became quite curious about this little sister of his. Who was this girl, travelling around the world so independently and managing to forget all her suitcases, because she had feasted too much on her last day in the Indies? He decided that he wanted to get to know her.

And so it happened that the three of us travelled together by car back to the Netherlands. We had a hundred things to talk about, and after this Rost van Tonningen could not erase me from his thoughts.

I myself was too full of all the different impressions of the past months. The return home, seeing Mother and Father after all this time, the political situation and the intensity of all the events taking place, all of this had precluded the idea of a deeper relationship with a man from entering my mind.

Besides, the whole situation wasn't that easy. My brother and I represented the folkish idea in Holland, while Rost van Tonningen came from the League of Nations—the opposite side. Even though he held exactly the same views, he didn't belong to our circle. Moreover, he was much older than me and a born orator, surrounded by many admirers.

And there was so much more to do! I had another pressing concern, my career plans in the East Indies. Because of the difficult political situation in Europe, I had already requested a little extra time, something that was not received all that well. In short, circumstances were enough to make my head spin.

When I arrived back at our family home, the beautiful Sunshine House, my first reaction was to wrap my arms around my parents and thank them for the especially loving and tolerant way in which they had dealt with my leaving for the Far East. I thanked them for the great trust and confidence they had in me, declaring my understanding that—because of those hereditary characteristics I so truly valued—all my roots and nature I owed to my parents.

Just think about my adventurous trips through the jungles of Sumatra and my journeys to Japan and China—all this at a time when girls were often deprived of a chance to do such things. What trust my parents had in me! Surely they must have asked themselves if they had made the right decision. But they let me have my freedom. Just think what dangers I had been in, all the things I had seen and done without truly realising the risks.

But now my parents knew what deep feelings of love, respect and gratitude I had for them and let me thank them for everything. The love and understanding my parents had for their children was singular. And we as children had such a strong bond between us, which could not be broken.

My brother Wim and I were especially close, even more so after our journey together. We had many of the same interests and ideals. These feelings of love, trust, mutual respect and high expectations, which bound us, were also much esteemed by my future husband. We were true comrades, something that never changed, neither in life nor in death. Certainly my awakening *Weltanschauung,* together with the love for my parents, had changed me and made my life rich. This filled us with hope and gave us strength, but would surely bring a lot of pain as well.

At that time there weren't the kinds of temptations and dangers that our youth of today faces. There were hardly any drugs at all and certainly not the kind of criminals we have today—ugly and de-

praved like the devil himself, living their lives in wealth and idleness, indulging in the vilest pleasures.

•These and many other so-called modern accomplishments did not exist at that time, although we could already see the signs. Only under strong, goal-oriented leadership could our nation have a chance to retain its old values and keep our country from falling into such wretchedness. This was the reason why many people in Holland were looking for a strong leader, who could take up the fight against such degeneration and keep the country from getting out of control and falling into moral and spiritual desolation.

It was Adolf Hitler who had already put an end to Communist agitation and crime in Germany. He saw through the lies of so-called modern artists and intellectuals, who create such twisted images of their own sick minds. Germany already had a few of these creatures, who today can be seen everywhere. The fact that Hitler was brave enough to take up the fight against these excesses can only be seen as a deed of utmost importance.

The NSB wanted to pursue similar policies with Mussert as its leader. We, too, wanted to create healthy conditions for our people. We wanted to remain true to our old values and to those standards developed over the course of centuries, and thus avert all destructive influences, whether they came from the Capitalists or the Communists. Were these thoughts really so wrong? Was it not, rather—seen from my position as a biologist—the only healthy way one could take?

In a long letter to Mussert, I told him about my experiences in the Indies. I stressed my respect for the efforts which the NJS had made, but told him about my concerns in the area of race relations. I wasn't sure if one could call the NJS a national group, since it had so many people of mixed race as members.

Mussert did not think this was much of a problem. I felt he just wanted a lot of members, no matter who or what they were. Rigorous racial hygiene was not a topic at this time. I felt disappointed and left the NSB.

My brother Wim held a leading position in the *Jeugdstorm* and was happy to be able to work with me again in building a strong girls' branch. Our group was very nationalistic, with members like Henk

Feldmeyer, who would later become leader of the Germanic *SS* and Conrad Nachenius, writer and artist, the photographer van Heemskerk Düker, whose pictures we used for our calendars and Nico de Haas, editor of the paper *De Hamer* (The Hammer). We were all members of the *Volkse Werkgemeenschap,* the Folkish Work Group. We had many contacts with individuals from Germany who shared our ideals.

We admired Adolf Hitler, the *Fiihrer* and all that he had achieved in such a short time. We thought of him as a great statesman and envied Germany because of him. Were we not kinsmen, one great family, people of the same race, the same nature, connected by the bonds of blood? We thought we had to walk hand in hand—walk, live and fight the good fight together, and to struggle together against everything and everyone threatening our lives and happiness.

Was this such a bad idea? Wasn't Communism the greatest threat to all of us? Why did so many refuse to see this? Why did they choose to listen to the mean, backstabbing lies spread by our enemies?

Chapter Three

At the Centre of Events

3.1 Barbed Wire

What was happening in the Netherlands at this time? Was the NSB making any progress? In *Volk en Vaderland,* an NSB newspaper, the following passage was published:

One can keep a nation of millions of people in the dark about the true situation by telling them cleverly conceived lies against a certain political movement. One can use all the means of power of our modern age to hinder its progress among the people. From 1935 through 1938 the political parties successfully spread their ties. They used all available means to make the National Socialist idea appear unacceptable. But they could not make the people forget their longing for a better future. In this time of crisis, people are moving away from the democrats, even if they are not yet ready for the solutions offered by the NSB.

In early 1939 things finally started to change. My husband had, with the help of his newspaper *Het Nationale Dagblad,* (The National Daily) managed to make one of the ministers resign, to quietly get rid of two pastors and to secure the prosecution of a well-known businessman who had been waging a reign of terror in the south of the country. There was a lot of criticism about the methods employed by the newspaper. It was said to be sensationalist and disgraceful. But we proved that this was the only way to get through to a sleepy nation. At 1938 the wall that had been built around our paper by the democrats was breached, and it was widely read by working people outside our organisation. In contrast to a thoroughly bourgeois democratic press, the fancy words of democrats and churches dab-

bling in politics, as well as the sleepy stories of the once-so-feisty leftist *Arbeiders Pers* (Workers' Press) the National Socialist press now spoke in a different tone, without lies and distortions.

One of my husband's assistants was Gerhardus H.J. Noordhuis, who was born on July 28, 1910, in Enschede, a large factory town close to the German border. After working as a journalist in the 1920s, he moved to Leiden in western Holland in 1936. There he became senior foreign editor for *Het Nationale Dagblad* under the direction of my husband.

At the end of 1939 he went to Berlin to work for the Reich Radio foreign language department, for which he presented Dutch-language news broadcasts.

All the Dutch newspapers received their news about foreign countries through the ANP press bureau in Amsterdam. If something happened in London, it passed on the information from Reuters, in Paris that reported by Havas, from Moscow the information supplied by Tass. From America, it reported what the United Press had to say, and so on.

But the Dutch newspapers did not receive their German news from the German DNB, but through foreign correspondents from Reuters, Havas, etc., who reported everything from their own, often-hostile, viewpoint. To this the ANP would add its own comments. This meant that you could not talk about true and honest reporting.

Noordhuis went to Berlin, and brought the news directly into Dutch living rooms. In July 1940 he returned to Holland and took charge of Dutch news broadcasts. These developed into a spoken magazine, with seventeen broadcasts daily.

He later wrote the following account of his time at *Het Nationale Dagblad.*

He Wrote 'Barbed Wire'
By G. Noordhuis

I had been working at different newspaper offices for seven years before the hour of truth came for me. I left the "neutrals" and started working as foreign editor for a political paper. I started at the bottom, working seven days a week and twenty hours a day. This is how I got my editor's position, which allowed me

to write and comment on my own. During these seven years I learned everything about the newspaper business, not only in the editorial office or with all the demanding outside work, but also everything about typesetting and printing. And then there was the constant fight with the directors over large businesses and their advertisements, which always had to be spared.

I need this introduction to describe the work of a man who became my supervisor at Het Nationale Dagblad, the new political paper of the National Socialist Movement in the Netherlands. The remarkable thing was that this man had never before worked on a newspaper at all He didn't have any idea about what was involved. An experienced all-round journalist, a knowledgeable expert would think it over twice before deciding to take on the task of managing a newspaper.

Rost van Tonningen, a man from the Geneva League of Nations completely in the picture on all political and financial matters saw himself facing great difficulties, so gigantic that nobody else would have taken up the challenge. He made it and how! In fact, he became editor-in-chief of a paper without real newspaper people, people who didn't have any idea how to produce a newspaper professors, doctors, industrialists and lawyers, all nice and friendly people, but not newspaper people. The masses who were supposed to read the paper could not understand the boring, long and complicated articles. No, Holland was certainly looking for a paper like this. It was an absolute disaster! This comforted our opponents. They had been expecting the roar of a lion, but all they heard was a fly.

Then, Dr. Rost van Tonningen showed his true talent. All-these distinguished men were politely asked to submit their future writings to other papers. Our editorial staff was reduced to six. The cover and layout of the paper were radically changed. Dr. Rost van Tonningen's editorials were written under the heading, "Barbed Wire". Both friend and foe devoured them! In the small office on the Keizerstraat in "Leiden, his presence could be felt everywhere running around like a whirlwind up and down the stairs, from composing room to printing office, stimulating everyone, sometimes yelling angrily, but more often cheerfully laughing. We had expected a spark from him, but what we got was a blazing fire! It was a delight to work like that. The editors accomplished things they didn't think themselves capable of. Purposeful and without respect of persons, Rost van Tonningen went his way. He attacked on all fronts. His trenchant editorials were written with ferocity; but he was at his best when he applied a little of his sense of humour. This humour was deadly for his enemies. With his writ-

ings he was able to force a minister of justice to resign, chase two clerics from their churches and bring to court a well-known businessman.

On the day that Mussolini, Daladier and Chamberlain came to Munich and the Prime Minister of Britain made his famous speech about "peace in our time", Rost van Tonningen wrote an editorial declaring triumphantly, 'The shining genius of the Führer *has pushed the Bolsheviks out of Europe!" This was the way he saw it, and so he wrote.*

Then our enemies, with their superiority in manpower and war materiel, brought Germany to unconditional surrender. Rost van Tonningen stayed at his post until the very end. Even in captivity the men in power feared him. He was murdered in jail in a way too gruesome to describe. He had to be removed. There was dreadful fear that he might have a chance to speak out in court about every thing he knew. His spoken word would have been every bit as deadly as his written word in Het Nationale Dagblad.

G. Noordhuis
Denekamp, 1991

After the war Noordhuis was arrested and detained in The Hague, Groningen and Breda. In 1947 he was sentenced to thirteen-years' imprisonment and banned from writing for the rest of his life.

In 1952 he was released on parole. After a period of unemployment, he started his own hotel on the island of Terschelling in 1956. It had 240 beds, with German guests only. Repeatedly, he ran into trouble with the State Finance offices. In 1974 he sold his hotel to write his memoirs. Nobody dared to publish these, not even in Belgium or Germany. The German newspapers even turned down his articles about Rudolf Hess.

So much for freedom of the press!

3.2 Unity Through Community of the People

When Adolf Hitler came to power, 6.3 million Germans were unemployed, and the nation was in great debt. In just a few years,

Hitler was able to change the entire face of the German economy. Not only did he totally eradicate unemployment, but he also paid off half of the national debt. Meanwhile, he made trade agreements with different countries which were in the best interest of both parties. The German Reich witnessed an unprecedented cultural upsurge. Everyone was hopeful again, and the German people felt that a brighter and better future lay ahead—something that was reflected in the birthrate, which rose considerably.

One of the organisations at this time was *Kraft Durch Freude* (Strength Through Joy) under the leadership of Dr. Ley. He organised trips to the Mediterranean, voyages on the Black Sea and trips to the Far North. Through the development of the *Volkswagen* by Ferdinand Porsche, every German was given the chance to own an automobile. Hitler came up with a savings plan for all those interested in a car, which was to cost RM 1000. To enable them to reach all parts of Germany quickly and safely, Dr. Todt was commissioned by the *Führer* to build the *Reichsautobahnen,* which improved the transportation infrastructure throughout Germany. Dr. Todt also became involved in landscaping to make the *Autobahnen* a pleasure for the eye as well, while not disturbing the beauty of the land.

Another one of Hitler's great innovations was the *Reichsarbeitsdienst,* (Reich Labour Service). In this organisation young people—girls as well as boys—were given an opportunity to come together and become acquainted with the world of work, by working together on great projects like land reclamation and improvement, which were done on a non-profit basis for the general good.

And then there were the great German youth organisations, like the *Hitlerjugend* and the *Bund Deutscher Mödel* for girls... Unforgettable was the yearly *Stern-Marsch zum Führer,* the "Star March" to the Leader, in which young people from all parts of Germany marched to Nuremberg.

Our body and soul were as a unity, with our heart at its centre. Just look at the happy faces of that time—what a marked contrast to those of the present time! Think about the many teen-age suicides today.

As a counterpart to the German SA, the *Weerafdeeling* (WA) was formed in Holland. The *Jeugdstorm* made weekly marches of about

thirty to fifty kilometres, with drums, music and songs composed by one of our comrades named Melchert Schuurman. Especially well attended were the camps on the Goudsberg. Mussert, van Geelkerken, Rost van Tonningen and others gave speeches. We had a direct link with *'Reichsjugendführer* Theo Stadler, who was the man in charge of the office for borderland and nationality matters. His opinions were similar to ours, as representatives of our own nation. As a representative of the Reich youth movement, he was the first one to visit us for the purpose of making joint plans. One of these plans was to organise a course at the Potsdam school for youth-movement leaders, which was attended by about 100 young people.

For the girls' section of the *Jeugdstorm,* I went to meet with the Reich's leader of the *SS,* Heinrich Himmler. I found myself sitting in a reception room, waiting to be let into his office. The wait was no trouble at all. The most wonderful and exciting magazines were stacked on a table. They made me forget everything else around me, not paying any attention when someone entered the room. I was totally absorbed in my reading. I was very surprised to feel someone tapping me on the shoulder, and as I looked up I saw Heinrich Himmler standing right in front of me. I jumped up and apologised, but he smiled and asked me into his office. He talked to me for an hour, explaining his ideas about the girl as a woman in the process of formation and how they were at the heart of every nation. The grandeur of his thoughts, his calm conversation and the clarity of his ideas were a real revelation to me, which I often recalled in later years. My husband and I had similar feelings when Himmler invited us to visit him together. He, too, was always very impressed by Himmler's farsighted vision. Later, after I had married my husband, we met Himmler many times at *SS* meetings, at his home or at dinner parties. He never forgot to remind me of our first encounter.

In those days we had a girls' camp on the Goudsberg in Lunteren under the leadership of Lien van Eck, which I was to take over completely. One day we were to hear a speech by Rost van Tonningen. Since he had a reputation as a great orator, we were all looking forward to it. He delivered a great speech about the Germanic people in Europe and the history of the German Reich.

My brother and I often had discussions about the future of our nation. One of the main problems that occupied us was: How could we remain sympathetic to Germany if our own country should become involved in a war with that nation?

3.3 The Questionable Neutrality of Prime Minister Colijn

In the year 1903 Abraham Kuyper stopped a general railroad strike with his Anti Revolutionary Movement, of which General Duymaer van Twist was an important force against the abortive revolt instigated by Pieter Jelles Troelstra and his SDAP (Social Democratic Workers' Party). Another strong personality in the Anti-Revolutionary Movement was Hendrik Colijn, who had been a captain in the Atyeh pacification war in the Dutch East Indies. During the 1920s and '30s he was intermittently minister of war and prime minister, besides being a director of the Royal Dutch Shell Oil Company in London for a while.

Colijn had a lot of influence in Dutch politics. More or less by accident he was not prime minister at the outbreak of the Second World War. Much impressed by German military potential, he wrote a highly interesting and fascinating brochure called *Between Two Worlds,* in which he expressed the opinion that Germany would win the next war and for which he was later much criticised. In the summer of 1942, many documents were discovered in his garden, buried in lead boxes. These showed conclusively that he had been working for years as a secret-service agent of Great Britain. Earlier, Colijn had been a correspondent for the anti-revolutionary paper *De Standaard.* He had got himself involved in a conflict over General van Daalen's campaign in the Atyeh war, cuts in military expenditure and the policy of intervention in the East Indies, a conflict in which Lieutenant-General M.B. Rost van Tonningen, my future husband's father, was directly involved. Colijn had taken an aggressive stance

against the position of Rost van Tonningen, who defended himself strongly against these accusations. The latter was vehemently opposed to these military cutbacks, because he felt that Dutch interests in the East were clearly at risk. This put him squarely at loggerheads with government policy, something that was strongly resented.

To keep prices at an acceptable level, Colijn had ordered tons of surplus tomatoes, fruits and vegetables to be destroyed yearly. These products were perfectly good, but for market reasons could not be sold. This came to the attention of the German minister of agriculture, Walter Darré. Minister Steenbergen was invited to Germany to discuss possible uses of Dutch surplus produce, and a proposal was made to sell such surplus to Germany, which did not have enough fresh food for its people. Whereupon Colijn sent his Jewish secretary, Hans M. Hirschfeld, to Berlin, and a contract was made for all our excess produce to be sent to Germany. Hitler was so impressed, that he presented Hirschfeld with a Golden Eagle medal. He was the second man to receive this distinction—Mussolini having been the first. Hirschfeld continued to work in Holland during the entire German occupation. His medal probably kept him from being deported. He kept in close contact with the Dutch government-in-exile in London, right up till the end of the war.

The following is the original transcript from the trial of General Rauter in Dutch captivity, given by the Bureau of War Documentation in Amsterdam:

> **Rauter:** Yes, Colijn is a curious man. We found a bunch of documents in his garden hidden in a lead box. These were brought to Berlin. It was discovered that he was a British agent. He was not a true Dutchman. Colijn had a British order to fulfil in Holland. During the First World War he visited Berlin for three weeks. He had a friend in the Foreign Affairs office there. It was said that large, armour-plated German ships were equipped with 400mm guns. He went out and discovered that this was not true. The correspondence about this was also among his documents.
>
> Q: When was this discovery made?
>
> R: Before he was brought to Thuringia.

Q: This was in the summer of 1942.

R: Before this he had written the brochure.

Q: *Between Two Worlds.*

R: Yes, the *Two Worlds.* The *Führer* did not read this brochure. The Germans, about May 1940 often interviewed Colijn. I knew about this. Then he made the remark that Hitler was not aware of the power the Americans had. He thought the German army was very strong and that the war with Russia would take years. He did not believe in a victory over Stalin or a Blitzkrieg against Russia. Then, after a long war, Germany would be cornered and when positioned between two fronts, there would be a landing in the west at the right moment.

Q: Colijn saw this quite correctly!

R: Colijn was the only politician in Holland who was against the foreign policy of the government coalition.

Q: Are you sure that these statements were really expressed like that? There is a clear contradiction between them and the views expressed in *Between Two Worlds.*

R: Yes, this is what he said in the summer of 1940. I saw him as the man with the most lucid political insight of all the politicians in Holland at that time. *Standartenführer* Knolle must know more about this. Professor Wehofsich talked with him, too. He was the first one to get in contact with Colijn.

Q: Why was Colijn treated so well?

R: You cannot make a martyr out of someone like Colijn. You cannot mistreat a man like him. After all, he was seventy years old. I very much resented him for having worked as a British spy. After this I no longer believed in the independent policies of Holland. When the correspondence was found, the whole story came out. Colijn came into prominence under General van Heutz. He was also involved with Shell. He had enormous earnings.

Q: But this was common knowledge.

R: The British financed him. He got his salary from Britain, nowhere else.

Q: You said that documents were found relating to the First World War. But did you find anything about the occupation period?

R: No, nothing about that. These documents were all left over from the past.

Q: Did he know that these documents had been found?

R: No, he never knew that.

Q: Where were the documents taken?

R: I don't know. The RSHA in Berlin should know where they ended up. The *Führer* did see them. He wanted to make use of them after the war. They fitted in wonderfully with the Führers post-war plans...

3.4 The Internment of M.M. Rost van Tonningen

On September 2 and 3, 1939, Britain and France declared war on Germany. Holland declared itself neutral. The mobilisation of the Dutch troops was accelerated. Our nation could not escape the effect of events, even though it was only indirectly involved at this time. From the beginning it was clear that this was to be an ideological war in Europe. It was the collision of two worlds, about which Mussert had already spoken at the beginning of the year. Sections of the Dutch population had become anti-German, thanks to a continuous and biased public "enlightenment" about the nature and purpose of National Socialism, and thus even more pro-British and pro-French. Our Anglo-Saxon attitude was displayed in sympathy for the leading war powers. The government in the Netherlands could not hide its pro-British feelings, despite the fact that the Dutch were supposed to be neutral.

I can remember when my brother Dolf returned temporarily to Holland with his family on a long leave from the Dutch East Indies and was called back to active duty as a captain. Together with him and my brother-in-law Daan Kruseman we rented a house in Leiden.

To assist in giving medical care in case of an acute war situation in the Netherlands, I was able to work for a while at the Anna Clinic there under the supervision of Dr. van Nes.

Meanwhile, the Dutch were very much afraid that they would not be able to stay out of the war this time around. After meeting with Mussert, Meinoud Rost van Tonningen went to Berlin. He wanted to talk to Hitler to avert the threat of war for the Netherlands and to ensure its neutrality. It was a great disappointment for him that Hitler could not give a decisive answer. Little could one suspect that neutrality didn't really exist anymore among the European countries, since most governments had already taken sides with the Jewish-Capitalist party. It was not widely known at this time that the World Jewish Congress had already declared war on Germany in the year 1933 in the name of the entire Jewish nation.

One day in 1940 Rost van Tonningen noticed the abundant presence of policemen during a speech he was giving in Rotterdam. He welcomed them and stated that the entire room should be filled with secret-service agents and detectives, because then they would all go home afterwards as National Socialists.

Then came the blow. For days Rost van Tonningen had noticed his car being followed by the police. On May 3 he was arrested in front of his house in The Hague. Along with about twenty others, he was taken to Ooltgensplaat on the island Overflakkee. The prisoners were to be sent by ship to England.

During this time his mother received telephone threats every night, saying things like, "Your son has been killed. Your son is dead. We hung him this morning". This often happened between thirty and forty times a night.

Rost van Tonningen was taken to Flushing to be shipped to England from there. Because of the rapid German invasion, however, these plans could not be carried out. During a bomb attack the torpedo-boat destroyer that was to take them was sunk, and as the German troops came closer the prisoners were taken south to Boulogne. But the Germans swiftly advanced there as well and so the men were taken to Calais. Upon their arrival Calais was under fire as well, and the Tommies needed all available shipping space them-

selves. In any event, the boat on which the prisoners were to be transported was hit by a bomb and destroyed.

After the men had spent thirty-six hours on the front line, they were finally rescued by German troops. At peril to his own life, Rost van Tonningen was given the opportunity to meet with General Rommel to request a marching order back to the Netherlands. Rommel showed him a ring and asked: "Do you recognise this?" Rost van Tonningen answered, "Yes, certainly, that's the Death's Head ring of the *SS"*. Thereupon Rost van Tonningen received papers for himself and the other prisoners. But he had to organise the trip back himself.

First, they spent the night in an old castle nearby, where, famished as they were, they ate great amounts of fresh rhubarb. They also found a well-stocked wine cellar. There they helped themselves as well. This unhealthy mixture, after being starved for so long, was too much for the men's stomachs—with predictable results. Nevertheless, the feeling of being free again filled them with great joy.

The newspaper *Het Nationale Dagblad* announced only that the whereabouts of the escapees was unknown, as General Winkelman had ordered. It was Heinrich Himmler who gave Rost van Tonningen's brother, Mr. J.H.W. Rost van Tonningen, and his lawyer, Mr. Nijgh, an order to begin a search for him right away. His brother went immediately to General Winkelman, who told him that he did not know the whereabouts of Rost van Tonningen, but assured him that he had not been taken out of the country, since this would have been illegal! In their search operation they could get no further south than the Dutch province of Zeeland and were unable to cross the Belgian border. They could only free NSB members who were left behind in Ellewoutsdijk. The search for Rost van Tonningen was now pursued at the highest levels. *Obergruppenführer* Werner Lorenz was sent to Holland by Himmler to look for him. Lorenz told Mussert that Adolf Hitler himself had put out an order to shoot a number of British officers as a reprisal if Rost van Tonningen were harmed. An *SS* detachment was ordered to look for him, but without result.

In a May 10, 1990, interview on Dutch television, Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands gave his view on the subject:

Plan Yellow was the code name for the German offensive in the west in May 1940, specifically the capture of the Dutch seat of government in The Hague. The SS conquered the island of Zeeland. The French troops who had tried to help stop the German advance were taken prisoner after landing and expelled." The Prince did not find any Resistance movement in Zeeland, only NSB members. He continued: "I think it was at Sluts, two army trucks or open vehicles with military police came along. They drove up, their right hands in the air giving the German salute; and then I asked, well, who are these people? And then they said they were Rost van Tonningen and, you know, the whole bunch. That is when I wanted to put a stop to the whole thing and told the officer-in-charge—a captain or lieutenant, I don't remember—well, if they come out now, just let them run and put your machine-guns on them. Then we'll be rid of them. My deputy, Pfaff, told me that I couldn't do such a thing.

Pfaff 's son then added:

Yes, there you have the difference between a regular officer and Bernhard, who originally only received brief military training—by my father, actually. Bernhard thought that in the given circumstance, this would be an easy solution to the problem. But my father, suspecting that military law was being violated, kept him from it—though not without some difficulty, saying, "No, your Highness, this is something we cannot do. That is the very system we are fighting against. We can't use those same methods ourselves

My comment to this: The interview shows that the Prince wanted to act against the laws of warfare even back in 1940!

3.5 Queen Wilhelmina Transfers Her Residence to Britain

People were divided over National Socialism. For the first time in history, national interests were put in the foreground. This meant

that if one became a National Socialist, it was not out of egotistical motives, but total selflessness. One voted for the nation, not for a system like democracy. The media was in favour of the Western allies, which caused anti-German feeling throughout the nation. Families were often divided by different political directions. Luckily, there were exceptions, with the entire family sharing the same views. In our family the decision was an easy one, our father being German. Through him we learned to love Germany and German culture.

When the German troops invaded Holland, everything happened very fast. At 4:00 in the morning, large squadrons of warplanes flew over the country. The air was filled with the sonorous drone of the aeroplane engines. The first thing we did every morning was to turn on the radio. At first we expected an all-out attack on Britain. Not much was to be seen of the Dutch troops. But the media quickly informed us that Holland was now at war with Germany.

In the later morning hours, we were told that German paratroopers had landed behind the Grebbe Line. In the eastern part the country, in the vicinity of Arnhem, the fighting was already over by noon. German troops marched westward along the country roads, the long columns of soldiers interrupted only by horse-drawn vehicles and tanks. Among the Dutch people watching this spectacle from the roadside, many were so impressed that they gave a "Heil Hitler" to the German soldiers. They were not even members of the NSB or such, but just plain, ordinary people.

The "Grebbe Line" was the main line of defence between the eastern and western parts of the Netherlands. Here the Germans met their first strong resistance.

The situation was very different on the western side of this line. NSB members were taken hostage by the dozens and brought to prisons or school buildings, which had been turned into improvised gaols. Many were taken prisoner by military personnel, whose victims, no matter how young or old, had to keep their hands high in the air for up to four hours. In other cases, the prisoners were badly maltreated. In some parts of the Netherlands the arrests were made by soldiers who thought that NSB members should be shot right away. A total of seven people died during their arrest. One of them was Mussert's brother, who was shot by one of his own lieutenants.

Vice-Admiral Rost van Tonningen, Meinoud Rost van Tonningen's brother, was badly injured when he was shot in the neck by one of his men. Some of our headquarters functionaries, as well as Mrs. Mussert, my brother Wim and comrade Woudenberg, were taken to the "Krententuin" in Hoorn. I remember my brother telling me how he tried to create a game of chess out of matchsticks and little pieces of trash, using an old razor.

The following is an original message he wrote me:

DearFlore,

As you see, you have not heard the last of me yet!

I have been arrested, too. The treatment is ~~terrible~~ inmates, with three (two GermanJews and me) in one cell, where it is impossible ~~to~~ no sleep lavatory, no blankets, no mattress or straw, no food for a whole day. In Hoorn I stayed in a derelict institute for alcoholics (and this without having had at least a little drop first). The results: three inmates have gone insane, one has died because of lack of medication. Five days without being able to wash or change clothes. Not a word from Henk Feldmeyer. It is possible that he was taken to Zeeland with Rost van Tonningen. He is in the southern islands of Holland. Zeeland is still being de fended, ~~so~~ difficult...

W.J.Heubel

Hilversum, May 16, 1940

Ria Mussert kept an old pillow cover for years after her release, in remembrance of her stay in prison. Several of her comrades had signed their names on this pillow cover. The bad treatment and lack of medical care for those arrested was beyond belief. Apparently the German invasion came as a total surprise for the Dutch. No preparations whatever had been made for the internment of NSB members. It is a credit to the Germans that, because of their rapid invasion, none of our people were starved to death.

The Dutch government, in the meantime, became more and more confused. All kinds of contradictory orders were given. As it became clear that the planned inundation of part of the country to create a water barrier would be useless against modern airborne troops, the Queen decided to transfer her residence to Britain. This was despite the fact that only days before—when the writer van

Loon offered his villa in the United States as a refuge—all the papers had loudly proclaimed: "THE HOUSE OF ORANGE WILL NEVER LEAVE ITS POST!" Just as had happened in earlier times during the Napoleonic invasion, the government seemed beyond remedy, the country beyond rescue and the nation beyond reason. On May 15 the cabinet and the royal family fled to London. They took their residence abroad, which was **in flagrant violation of Article 21 of the Dutch Constitution,** which all had sworn to uphold. This could not be done entirely without struggle, however. Minister Steenbergen had to be taken along in bondage, because he refused to go voluntarily! And not very long ago, Prince Bernhard declared on Dutch television that he had intended to stay as well. Under such circumstances it is interesting to note where one's heart lies. In this case, Prince Bernhard thought it was important to hide a few bottles of very good wine in the gardens of the royal residence, as he declared in this interview.

From the very first day of the invasion it was evident that the German soldiers were acting very civil and correctly towards the Dutch citizens. There was great public indignation over our Queen Wilhelmina's flight and the abandonment by our government. Especially for us NSB members it was the greatest disappointment of our lives that the House of Orange, which we had always revered, was behaving like this.

Completely unaware of events taking place, I was travelling to Berlin for the *Jeugdstorm* to meet Professor Lutz Heck. He welcomed me with the words, "Congratulations, Miss Heubel, you have now become a citizen of the German Reich". At first I did not understand what had happened. But when I heard about the invasion of the Netherlands, I became very angry. The spontaneous reaction of Professor Heck was to take me in his car and drive me through the city of Berlin, which was in a state of victorious celebration. Heck was a friend of Hermann Goring and went hunting with him on a regular basis. Because of this friendship, I had the opportunity to meet Goring a couple of times myself. It was now impossible to return to Holland, because the border was closed to all private travellers.

During this time Dr. Edmund Halm asked me if I would be willing to work for the so-called Holland Plan under the supervision of Dr. Ispert of the Ministry of Propaganda in Berlin. Together we worked out plans for the popular revival of Holland and Flanders. As soon as it was possible, Dr. Ispert took me to the Netherlands. This was far from easy, since the borders were still closed to private travel. When I finally got off the train in Amsterdam, it was a surprise to see a bright red Swastika flag at the Victoria Hotel across the square. All over town these flags had suddenly appeared.

On July 1, 1940, the journalist W. Goedhuys wrote the following letter to M.M. Rost van Tonningen:

Dear Comrade,

Just heard about your safe return at a press conference. At this time, I want to take the opportunity to send you a heartfelt welcome! What a relief. From the bottom of our hearts we hope you have got out of this hellhole unscathed, both internally and externally. My wife also sends you her kindest love. Your imprisonment has been a shock to us. It made us miserable for days. There will be a run on you from all sides. I would suggest that you gain some distance and be sure to test the waters first. In these few days since the outbreak of the war many things have changed, even among the Germans. All kinds of new gatherings and groups are forming. Everyone is waiting for Rost van Tonningen. It is now a fact that you will have to take on an enormous task for the sake of the Netherlands. Really, half the nation has been waiting for your return. You have probably been more popular during your time in prison than ever before. Please forgive these outpourings at this particular moment, but in the past few weeks I have had many contacts with all kinds of groups and movements. I was able to gauge the confusion and want to warn you against hasty decisions. I cannot dispel the fear that you might lose a major opportunity by hasty decision. Once more, do not make any definite decisions before the situation is perfectly clear to you and please don't listen to any advice except this one!Forgive me this hasty intrusion, but it is realty necessary.

Hou Zee!

W. Goedhuys

On June 5, 1940 E.L.M.Th.J. von Bonninghausen, Esq., wrote this letter to M.M. Rost van Tonningen:

Dearest Meinoud!

Congratulations on your release and glorious return. I was very deeply touched by your unjust and dishonourable imprisonment, caused by the same kind of mendacious insinuations which caused my sudden discharge from the civil service after more than twelve years of dedicated service. Jewry and political Catholicism did this to you and to the other comrades. You were the one who, time and again, showed Dutch National Socialists who the real poisoners of our nation were. They have good reason to try to destroy you with all kinds of devious ways, and means. The hand of the Almighty saved you for our National Socialist Holland. All expectations are directed toward you. An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth—that should be the principle by which to judge those secretive powers who treated you so maliciously. Anyone who has even the slightest bit of insight into the pernicious mentality of Jewry and then looks at the picture in Het Nationale Dagblad *of your heroic mother, yourself and Feldmeyer, should understand that these were the kind of people whom the Jews wanted to destroy at all cost.*

I am delighted about the liberation of the Netherlands by Germany. Thus was created the singular possibility to fulfil our ideals within a short period of time. Your latest article in the DagbLad*, "The Social Revolution", showed the only way to lead us to our destination. This article is great, a real Rost van Tonningen again, I heard many people say. I think the flight of the royal family is a real advantage to us. The Dutch have always been republican at heart. The merits of the House of Orange in earlier ages have been excellent, but certainly not better than those of, say, the German Hohenzollern, Queen Wilhelmina completely failed as a leader in difficult times, thereby losing her right to leadership by old Germanic standards. She clearly and openly sided with International Jewry and national breakdown against her own people and its best sons. If you should have a free weekend at your disposal, we would like to extend our invitation for you to visit us, and likewise for madam your mother if she would like to come. You both have an open invitation.*

With National Socialist greetings, likewise from Mama and Ernst,
Egon.

On his return, my husband-to-be found most of the press coverage about his reception in The Hague to be strongly positive.

The German daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine* stated: "He was joyfully welcomed by a crowd of thousands." Mussert, however, probably

would not have been at all sorry if Rost van Tonningen had never come back. In the NSB headquarters there was a concerted attempt, mainly by certain Catholic members, to bring Rost van Tonningen into discredit with Mussert.

Influenced by press coverage which suggested that everybody who had been arrested must have done at least something to deserve it, Mussert was willing to get rid of Rost van Tonningen if these allegations were proved to be true. The underlying motive, however, was that Mussert somehow felt himself inferior to Rost van Tonningen, indeed feared him as a rival. Rost van Tonningen now experienced the pettiness of an NSB leadership, which had dropped him completely in times of hardship, not even bothering to find out where he was. All of this left him with a deep scar inside. He could not understand how people who purported to live for an ideal could act so treacherously. This is how he really got to know his so-called comrades. Did he give up his brilliant career in Vienna, where he was universally admired, for this?

It is a credit to Rost van Tonningen's character that, in spite of all this, he remained loyal to Mussert, and in a way even appreciated him.



Zita, my faithful German shepherd dog

Chapter Four

My Wedding

The War Years, Part One

4.1 Some Important People During the German Occupation

Dr. Arthur Seyss-Inquart
Reich Commissioner for the Netherlands

Of Austrian descent, supporter of the "Greater Germany" idea. Tall, with grey-blond hair and blue eyes hidden behind thick glasses, he was known only as a lawyer when my husband worked in Vienna. He walked with a slight limp, because of an injury from the First World War. Seyss-Inquart wanted only the best for the Netherlands. He did his best to master the Dutch language, as he was very interested in the Dutch people and culture, especially their music.

As an Austrian, he was a staunch Catholic. Known for his friendly nature and charming ways, he was an outstanding host. A good choice of Hitler. Because of Seyss-Inquart's friendly ways, it was expected that the Dutch would like him as well.

Initially his policies could be called very mild, almost lax. This encouraged the Resistance to become bolder, spurred on by Radio Oranje from London. If at first the Dutch were relatively pro-German, this changed as a result of the indecisiveness and lack of clarity of his actions. He turned away from difficult decisions, much to the concern of his secretary-generals. Probably due to his

Catholic upbringing, he didn't really fit in with the Protestant mentality of the Dutch.

He was very intelligent, with a deep feeling for music.

Because of his actions, the Dutch actually received more food than they had during the First World War, in which they had remained neutral. This only changed with the great railroad strike of 1944.

In his house *Clingendael* he was a most charming host. His receptions were always very stylish. He was especially polite to us women, as is customary in Vienna. He was very much interested in sports, especially golf. He was very happily married. I had a very good relationship with his wife. His children were very well mannered. Only his daughter lived with him at *Clingendael*

This noble, kind-hearted man was hanged at Nuremberg, after climbing the thirteen steps to the scaffold. The verdict was based on criminal, retroactive laws.

My husband could not say that Seyss-Inquart had done a good job for the Netherlands. He could not make decisions or give a straightforward yes or no.

But whatever his mistakes might have been, he was a hero in death. With a calm and steady voice, he spoke his last words:

/ hope this execution will be the last tragic act of this war, and that you will learn from its results, so there can be peace between the nations. As a German, I truly believe that I cannot cry "Heil Hitler" today and "Hosanna" tomorrow. I loved Germany and remained faithful to her.

Some of his statements in the last days before his death:

Since I am certain to die, I am at peace. I can live through every minute, through all the different actions and procedures, feeling nothing but love and peace. Of course this assurance does not come naturally. It is the result of a continuous struggle with one's self, every day anew. I am alive, and life calls me.

At one o'clock on his last night he said: *"I ask my family to remain strong."* He then wished his children well and told his wife how much he loved her. *"1 am jours! Arthur."*

At 2:30 it was his turn. Calm and a little slow, due to his bad leg, he .ascended the scaffold. His hands were tied behind his back with a black rope. Then his glasses were taken off, and a black cap put over his head. He was executed at exactly 2:45. The doctor declared him dead at 2:57....

Dr. Steinhauer reported the following:

This is the end of an uncrowned king. Ruler over nine million people, hanged, robbed of his clothing and the ashes of his body scattered to the wind.

In Mattsee his brave and lonely widow had a tombstone put in back of her house, in which she remained with her youngest daughter. The inscription read:

Reichsminister Dr. Arthur Seyss-Inquart
Stannern 22.7.1892 - Nuremberg 16.10.1946

I knew Seyss-Inquart and his wife very well. I can only say the following: Despite all the problems that he caused my husband, I respect him deeply. He died a hero's death by the rope. Seen cosmically, this could be considered his greatest reward.

SS Leader Hannes Rauter
Right-hand man of Himmler, *Reichsführer* of the *SS*

He had a special order to look after my husband. This is what he said about him:

Rost van Tonningen was a fighter, very smart, very intelligent. Mentally he was part of one of the highest nations. His thoughts ran at express-train speed, very easy to upset. Rost van Tonningen was totally for the Netherlands and talked to Reich Commissioner *Seyss-Inquart in a way no other Dutchman could have. He was a radical National Socialist, but also a true Dutchman!*

Mussert suffered from a "Rost van Tonningen complex". He clearly saw him as a rival

Because of various circumstances, the Germans thought the NSB should be the only political organisation permitted in the Netherlands. They wanted to accomplish this as soon as possible. As my husband predicted, a flood of new members came to register for the NSB. Because of this, the party lost its fighting spirit. It was now an established political party.

Many members tried to reap the fruits of victory by getting positions as mayors or high civil servants. All of this made it difficult to spread the *SS* ideal around the nation. It was Rauter's goal to protect the worthiest families during intrusions and investigations.

In the spring of 1945 an attempt was made on his life, in which his driver was killed. Rauter himself survived, however, even though he was badly injured and thrown into a ditch. With his last bit of strength, he threw his gun so the next German car that drove by along the road could see it. He was found and taken to a German hospital, only to be transferred and extradited to the Netherlands after the war. He was arrested, tried and convicted, then sentenced to death. His last words in front of the firing squad were:

"I pray to the Almighty that my blood will wash away the hatred between the Germans and the Dutch."

Then he gave the final command himself:

"Fire!"

The director of the state prison in Scheveningen asked permission to be present during the execution. He later talked about the way Rauter carried himself, even in death. This moved him deeply. As he had requested, his hands were not tied, and his eyes were not covered.

Hannes Rauter was my husband's friend. They were very much alike. They both admired Himmler. Rauter was also a great friend to me, always openly expressing his admiration. His wife Else and their

children often visited us. In short, Rauter lived a life full of struggle and challenge in dedication to the folkish ideal. After helping to defeat the Marxist revolution in his country, he was one of the leading figures in the fight against Jewish Capitalism. He worked directly alongside Hitler to make the dream of a Greater German Reich come true.

Gottfried Aschmann
German envoy in the Netherlands

After the German embassy in London was closed, Aschmann was sent to The Hague as special envoy. He was mainly responsible for contact with the Dutch press. About him, my husband wrote the following letter to H. Hushahn on June 14,1940:

Dearest Husbahn,
You once asked me about the conversation I had with Aschmann about a week before my arrest. He had invited Mrs. van Schalkwijck and me to dinner. After this we went to the German embassy on the Copes-van-Cattenburg Laan, where Toggenburg and Hahn joined us. Suddenly, Mrs. van Schalkwijck. began to criticise German economic policies and started praising the accomplishments of the British. She declared that she had been in close contact with the British, and that their plans were so brilliant, they would be able to completely "dry-up" the Continent. She also declared German production of synthetic materials worthless, and said our only salvation would be the re-establishment of international trade. This could only be accomplished with British assistance. The German military victory in Norway she declared worthless. Germany could not let its army invade such vast empty territories, without being subjected to a slow death.

This economic and military nonsense wouldn't have deserved any serious discussion, if Aschmann had not agreed wholeheartedly. He didn't want to hear anything positive about the German supply of basic materials. With this, he belittled Germany's military accomplishments. Under the influence of too much strong drink which he started consuming at an increasing rate the discussion became livelier. I must admit to my shame that I let myself get involved in this discussion.

I pointed out that Germans who made such statements were basically traitors toward those who fought at the front. I accused Aschmann, saying it was obvious

that these theories were being devoured by the enemies of the Third Reich. I have to say that Toggenburg and Hahn backed me, but they left early. During the discussion among the three of us we almost ran into a serious conflict.

I later heard that after my arrest, Aschmann talked very negatively about me.

I have dictated this letter in a hurry. For more information and confrontations with Aschmann, you can count on me.

Hou Zeel

M.M. Rest van Tonningen

Otto Bene
Assistant to Reich Commissioner Seyss-Inquart at the League of Nations

Pointed out the difficulties in the German-Japanese alliance, of which he was aware after having worked in Japan. He knew a lot about Japanese sensitivities.

I knew Otto Bene and his wife very well. He was an extraordinary person, who liked my husband very much, not only as a person, but also as a man of great knowledge. He was deeply hurt by my husband's death and remained a friend after the war.

Dr. Albert Bühler
Messenger of the German *Reichsbank* at the Bank of the Netherlands

In March 1942 Dr. Bühler declared himself against the idea of letting Dutch banks outside Amsterdam be ousted by German banks, like the Dresdener Bank, the Bank Albert de Bary, the Commerzbank and the Bank der Deutschen Arbeit. The same position was also strongly advocated by my husband. At first my husband and Dr. Bühler got along really well. He came to visit us quite often. But after Stalingrad he totally changed his opinions, declaring the opposite of what my husband believed in.

After the war he was rewarded with the position of director of the Bank Deutscher Lander. He was pleasant to associate with. I had a good relation with him and his wife.

Dr. Ir. Richard H.R.F. Fiebig
Commissioner for the Netherlands
of the Reich Minister for Weapons and Ammunition

My husband got on extremely well with Fiebig. He told him about his plan to put Holland in the service of a great task: To supply an army of technicians which could be mobilised by the *Führer* at any time, for the construction of the *Autobahnen,* West Wall coastal defences, the production of weapons or the reorganisation of energy and waterworks. My husband said that you did not have to be an engineer to agree with Fiebig.

I, too, knew him very well. He was a difficult person. But if one were lucky enough to get along well with him, he would walk through fire for you.

During my escape to the north in 1945, my car was shot at by Allied bombers. This caused my wood-gas generator to catch fire. Luckily, my children and I were not hurt. I had a small emergency supply of petrol with me and happened to be near Fiebig's office. I gathered all my strength. Even though there were guards at his gate, I managed to get in. He was very nice and concerned about my children and me and helped me as much as he could. After he gave me some extra petrol, I was able to continue my trip to find a safe place to give birth to my child.

Dr. Hans Fischböck
Generalkommisar for Finance and Economy

Like Dr. Seyss-Inquart, Fischbock knew my husband from his time in Vienna. Fischbock had been a very good friend of Seyss-Inquart. During the first couple of years it seemed as though he agreed with my husband's point of view. But when he got to be Reich Commissioner for Price Fixing, he became a firm opponent of Dutch interests—and therefore of my husband as well. Fischböck was an exponent of Goring. Personally, I knew him and his wife quite well. He was always very charming to us women. I never liked

him, though, and it didn't surprise me at all how he changed his ways and became one of my husband's enemies.

Franz Graf Grote
55 *Standartenführer* and Senior Advisor
for the Dutch Food Supply

Graf Grote had good relations with the farming community. He was well liked by my husband, through whom he became friends with the farmers' leader, Dieters. When already in middle age, Dieters received training in Avegoor to become a member of the *SS*. He was then sent to the front. Graf Grote was a real sportsman, very agile and amiable. I got along well with him.

Dr. Wilhelm Harster Commander
of the Security Police

The Security Police consisted of two parts, the Secret State Police and the Security Service, which gathered information and supplied weekly reports on the political situation in the Netherlands.

Dr. Harster was well acquainted with my husband and myself. He valued my husband, but could not always do his job the way he would have liked to, due to the difficult circumstances. After the war he was held captive for only a short while. He was then released, because he knew too much about the Resistance.

Because of this, Willy Lages came to be the fall guy. Lages held the leading position in the SD office in Amsterdam. He was a nice man. I liked him personally, but because of the complicated situation in the Netherlands, it must have been difficult for my husband to work with him.

Dr. Med. Wolfgang Ispert
Member of the Security Police in Düsseldorf

Good friend of Feldmeyer and my brother Wim. When the border between Germany and Holland was closed during the Allied

invasion, he helped me get back into the Netherlands. This was very difficult Through my friendship with him, my husband also became his friend.

Fritz Knolle
SS Leader who worked for the Security Service

Because his mother was Dutch, he knew a lot about the Netherlands. Like Rauter, his life was one of danger, sacrifice and struggle. He was a great supporter of my husband, whom he said was wrongly accused and then murdered. He was deeply shocked by my husband's death. A good friend.

Fritz Kranefuss
Intelligence Commissioner of the SS
for Higher SS and Police Leader H.A. Rauter

Himmler's "watchdog" and a valued friend. *SS* man, very reliable. He and his wife and child fell victim to the Soviet occupation in Berlin.

On April 29,1944, my husband wrote a letter to Kranefuss, from which I quote:

I hope, dear Kranefuss, that you and your wife will be spared the terrible suffering of the German people caused by those bombing campaigns. I believe I can sense with what boldness and inexorable willpower the Führer takes on the final defence. I truly trust in a German victory in the end, especially since he has succeeded in rousing the German nation to such a tremendous effort.

I sign off, dear Kranefuss, with the best wishes for your family and "Heil Hitler"!

M.M. Rost van Tonningen

Fritz Schmidt
General Commissioner for Special Tasks

Originally a press photographer. Protege of Martin Bormann. Schmidt sought the annexation of Holland by Germany. He saw Mussert as a man he could use and finally destroy politically. He therefore sharpened the differences between my husband and Mussert. In my husband he saw a great enemy, who could cause his plan to fail. The tension between the *SS* and the NSDAP increased, which didn't do Holland any good and finally led to conflict.

On June 29, 1943, Schmidt fell out of a train and was instantly killed. Rumour had it that this was not an accident. His death brought a sense of relief to many. Nevertheless, Mussert felt it a disappointment.

I knew Schmidt well, because he was always the first guest at Dr. Seyss-lnquart's receptions. I thought of him as a very undesirable and repulsive sort of man, with an unprepossessive appearance. He was often referred to as "the toad". He was short, overweight, with short arms and legs. Not just my husband and I, but nobody liked this man. He was unable to function at receptions, not least because of his heavy drinking. He was a handy tool for Goring.

4.2 The Position of the NSB After the Invasion

In July 1940 Himmler, after travelling on the Western Front, came to the Netherlands to congratulate my husband on his freedom following his time in captivity. He wanted to introduce my husband to Seyss-lnquart, to talk over some important plans for the Netherlands.

Mussert was not considered the right person for a leadership position in our country. Himmler wanted to ask Seyss-lnquart if he thought my husband would be more suitable for the job. Kranefuss had already approved the idea. He had known my husband for a long

time and supported his political ideas. They wished to have a National Socialist movement under strong leadership. Himmler wanted my husband to be that leader.

He had already printed flyers and wanted to drop them by airplane over the country. His disappointment was great when my husband firmly stated that this would be a breach of loyalty to Mussert, and politely declined. Both Seyss-Inquart and Himmler could understand this. Finally, they stopped looking upon my husband as leader of the Dutch nation.

Now Himmler came upon another idea. My husband was to take the position of *SS* leader in the Netherlands. After hearing this, he laughed and replied: "Of course, *Reichsführer,* it would be a great honour for me to be a leader of the *SS.* But I do believe a younger man should do this, I know a capable young man, W.J. Heubel. I also know Feldmeyer well. Wouldn't they be the better choice? I am already forty-six years old. I think this would be the right job for Heubel."

This gave Himmler something to think about. He listened to my husband intently.

Finally, my husband presented his views about the financial and economic situation. He paid special attention to the budget plan, as he was looking for a way to lower income as well as prices.

My husband's future policies were already fixed. But now they were only at the beginning of a new Dutch policy, and many hurdles still had to be taken before he could give his speech as the new president of the Bank of the Netherlands in March 1941.

Meanwhile, I was working with Lady Juul Op ten Noort, who was a very good friend of Rost van Tonningen. I lived in lodgings in The Hague with two friends of mine, Zus Brakman and Emmy Fonkert. The apartment was very close to where Rost van Tonningen lived, and we therefore met more and more frequently.

After a rousing speech on the Goudsberg, he received an order from Mussert to investigate the occurrence of homosexuality within the party membership. I myself received an order to find out how our youth was being affected by this problem. Contact between Rost van Tonningen and myself was now indissoluble—we were of one mind. Still the situation was difficult. I felt that some people thought

of me as a "traitor" when they saw me together with Rost van Tonningen. My brother Wim was very happy about our deepening friendship, but because of jealousy Feldmeyer behaved very childishly.

Then, on a beautiful day in the dunes near The Hague, Rost van Tonningen asked me, "Florelore, will you be my wife?" The honesty, the sincere love and the charm that he put into this question confused me. I wanted to be his wife with all my heart, but... Wasn't the age difference too great? Then there was the rumour that there was some East Indian blood in the Rost van Tonningen family. And, on top of all this, I had come into conflict with Mussert after my return from the East, causing me to leave the party.

All this went around my head. My God, what was I to do? In my mind I could already hear Meinoud saying: "Florelore, do you really find this question so difficult to answer?" I wanted so much to throw my arms around him and tell him, "Yes, yes, what could be more wonderful than being the wife of such an impressive man." But then, on the other hand, I had had all this trouble with Mussert... What was he to think of all this?

Meinoud sensed my inner struggle. Softly, I heard his voice: "Florelore, I will take you to the heritage of my ancestors. The mighty call of their national spirit will excite you. Come, I will show you all of them" So we wandered through the gallery of his ancestors—noble, splendid men and women, dedicated Dutch citizens—what a treasure! We felt as one, even our age difference did not matter anymore.

But there still remained one question for me to ask: "Meinoud, since you are Mussert's deputy... and I... well, I left the party because of some differences of opinion I had with Mussert, so... what are we going to do now?" I had not even finished talking, when Meinoud burst into laughter, exclaiming: "What, Florelore, you left the party because you didn't agree with Mussert? This has to be the best joke I've heard in a long time! This is absolutely amusing!" He kept laughing, slapping himself on his knees.

Surprised, I just gazed at him. What was all of this about? Why in the world was he so amused? Was this his reaction to a problem that had caused me so many sleepless nights? I couldn't keep a straight

face for very long. Before I knew it, I was laughing too, partly out of nervousness and partly out of happiness. All at once we found ourselves in each other's arms, kissing passionately. From one moment to the next, we were the happiest people in the world. Nothing could come between us any longer. Our fate was sealed. Ours was the way of love and truth on Earth. We were sharing a cosmic bond into eternity.

The following day Meinoud called Himmler. "I am going to get married." To which Himmler replied: "I know your background and ancestors. Now I have to check the background of your wife-to-be." Neither Meinoud nor I had expected this. We had to promise Himmler not to tell anybody yet—not even my parents, who later could not understand why we had kept them in the dark for so long. Then *SS* leader Kranefuss intervened. This well known "watchdog" of Himmler kept getting in my way all the time, causing me much aggravation. I was hardly allowed to see Meinoud at all. I had to get his permission first! Then, finally, the long awaited message:

"Everything in order—congratulations!"
Heinrich Himmler.

Our wedding took place on December 21,1940.

4.3 Our Wedding

Mr. and Mrs. Heubel-van Haren Noman have the honour to announce the wedding of their daughter FLORRIE to Mr. M.M. Rost van Tonningen, LL.M. The ceremony will be held on Saturday, December 21, 1940, at 11:30 in Hilversum.
Hilversum, Bussumergrintweg 5
November 1940

Widow M. Rost van Tonningen, born van den Bosch, has the honour to announce the wedding of her son MEINOUD to Miss F.S. Heubel. The ceremony will be held on Saturday, December 21, 1940, at 11:30 in Hilversum.

The Hague, Groot Hertoginnelaan 215

November 1940

Present address: Suezkade 161, The Hague

Future address: Nieuwe Parklaan 96, The Hague

After the ceremony at Hilversum City Hall on December 21, Mr. M.M. Rost van Tonningen and Miss F.S. Heubel will have a reception at the Palace Hotel, Hilversum, between 12:15 and 1:15 PM.

Mr. and Mrs. Heubel–van Haren Noman have the pleasure of inviting the bride and groom to a Déjeuner–dinatoire, on the occasion of their wedding on December 21, at 1:30 PM. This will take place at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Heubel–van Haren Noman.

Please inform us of your acceptance of this invitation by December 17, 1940.

Frosty, sunny, winter weather under a steel-blue sky. This was our wedding day, December 21, 1940.

Why did we get married on this particular date? On this day in old Germanic tradition, the victory of Light over Darkness is celebrated. On this day the Sun reaches its lowest point, and then gets stronger and stronger with every new day. Those of us who are in touch with cosmic events experience the victory of Light over Darkness every year anew. My husband and I always felt connected with this cosmic event. It was very meaningful to us that we melded into one on this very special and important day.

A big celebration was held in our Sunshine House. My parents, my wonderful mother-in-law, family members, friends, acquaintances, bridesmaids — everywhere one could see happy faces and flowers, a sea of flowers. Then there were the letters, telegraphed messages and many best wishes. But above all, there was the intensely happy face of my husband Meinoud. Beautifully decorated white coaches, with smartly dressed coachmen, rode up and away.

We were then taken to the brand-new Hilversum town hall. There we had a grand reception. All our comrades from the *Jeugdstorm* were there as a guard of honour, followed by men of the *SS* and the entire NSB membership, with Mussert and Geelkerken in the lead. Our dear friend, Dr. E.J.B. Ernst von Bönninghausen, who had just been elected NSB mayor of Hilversum, gave a wonderful speech. He expressed high hopes that on our Viking ship, with Meinoud as its captain, many little Rost van Tonningens would take over the oars in the future.

After we signed all kinds of papers essential to every wedding, we went to the Palace Hotel. There we shook more than two thousand pairs of hands. What an ovation, what camaraderie, how my husband was honoured! How sincerely everyone wished him well!

Our wedding was to be the first *SS* wedding in the Netherlands, supervised by Himmler. For that reason my parents wanted to give their daughter a truly unforgettable reception in our Sunshine House. This made the day twice as impressive. We felt that it was as a gift from God.

As we returned to Sunshine House, we found that it had been changed into a true paradise. In the large living room there were many small tables, with chairs around them. At the front of the room there stood two seats of honour, one for Meinoud and one for myself.

After everyone was seated, the sliding doors were opened. There stood the Zeparoni Quartet. As their opening piece they performed the "Andante" from Quintet opus 29 in A-flat by Schubert. After this the wife of Nico de Haas sang "Liebesbotschaft" (Message of Love), also by Schubert. Then Nico himself gave a speech, followed by Henk Weimar singing Wagner's "Gebet des Rienzi". This was followed by a speech by *SS* leader Rauter, who presented us with a *Julleuchter,* a candle holder that is a symbol of life in the *SS.* Finally, the quartet performed a chorale by Bach.

After this first part of the celebration we enjoyed a wonderful dinner, enlivened by numerous speeches given by my father and also by my brother Wim, Feldmeyer, and other friends and family members. A feeling of warmth engulfed us. But the nicest speech was given by my husband himself. First he extended praise to my par-

ents, then thanked his mother for all the love she had given him. He then addressed my grandmother, who was having a wonderful time, sitting with Rauter, Feldmeyer and my cousin Jan van den Bosch, all in *SS* uniform. My grandmother relished all the warmth and happiness. She was not at all in favour of our ideas, but that did not bother her now. On the contrary, she thought it was great.

Finally, my husband turned to me and thanked Fate for having given him such a wonderful wife. He made a vow to do everything in his power to bring as much warmth and love into our Sunshine House as he possibly could.

Then it was time for us to leave. The train to Berlin would not wait, even on a day like this.

When we arrived in Berlin, we got our biggest surprise yet. Not only were we greeted at the station by a grand delegation, but we also had a beautiful reception at the Hotel Adlon given by Heinrich Himmler. It was the first one he had ever done.

Then Hitler himself took my hand and wished me luck. What an aura surrounded this man! Also present were many officials of the highest rank.

The next day we went to Munich, where we were welcomed by one of Himmler's confidants, Meyer-Miesbach from Miesbach. He then took us by horse-drawn sleigh to Himmler's log cabin in Valepp. We were warmly wrapped in blankets, and the horses had plumed bows on their heads. At the cabin we were greeted by Mr. and Mrs. Heiss, who were to entertain us for the next fourteen days.

It was an unforgettable time. My mother wrote saying that I should enjoy it to the fullest, because never again would I be as free of worries. How true these words proved to be! We enjoyed these days with an intensity never equalled. As soon as we returned to the Netherlands problems began, and our path was not strewn with roses.

But for now, I would like to end with a little anecdote about our dinner party. Rauter was my table partner. Suddenly he whispered, with a boyish grin on his face, "And, Mrs. Florrie, are you already expecting a little Rost van Tonningen?" I quickly replied: "If Kranefuss had not guarded us the way he did, but instead had worked a little faster on our family tree, then maybe I would by now be. But as

it is, dear comrade, no. Come and let us drink champagne to the future. To your health, cheers...!"

4.5 Plans and Rivalries

The following is the inaugural speech made by M.M. Rost van Tonningen, LL.M., as President of the Bank of the Netherlands, on March 20,1941:

> Gentlemen:
>
> Our nation is in the midst of one of the greatest upheavals in history. Events have surprised many of us. The war hurt many deeply in their souls. The inner separation that took place during the last eight and a half months since the 10th of May has not stopped. In fact, it has got worse. Life goes on every day. Daily work has to be done by the men and women of this country. Even though many suffer under the collapse of a bygone era which they cherished, they continue to fulfil their everyday duties. They are aware that the existence of our nation depends on the responsibility of individuals.
>
> Everyone who feels totally committed to our nation can understand the inner plight of those who are against the idea of a new Europe. To be able to live and work happily, one must believe in the tasks assigned to a people in a given historical period. It is a matter for every free individual to find his own way into the future.
>
> That the past will never return is not simply a National Socialist concept. Before May 10, even in our governing bodies the opinion was being voiced that Capitalist democracy was bleeding to death. A similar opinion was expressed by scientific writers in the democratic world, writers of international renown. One of the greatest supporters of the Anglo-Saxon democracies, the world famous French writer Andre Siegfried—a Protestant from Al-

sace—spoke out in the spring of 1931 in his book *England's Crisis.* In it he warned the British nation about the coming decline of its empire. His warnings turned out to be prophetic. That same year the pound lost its gold backing. The fall of the British pound caught the British public completely unawares. Their criminal press and unscrupulous leaders had misled them.

I can recall how the League of Nations was called into session in Geneva on that same Saturday when the pound was devalued. The British representative—at the time head of the British blockade—wanted to give a speech on the stability of the currency, a stability that England had maintained for seven years. He didn't get a chance to speak that afternoon, because the person before him had taken up all the remaining time. A couple of hours later he received word that the British pound had fallen. He therefore changed his speech, and on Monday morning he expressed the exact opposite of what he had been about to say. Nobody realised at the time that these events were the beginning of the end for a world empire.

At about the same time, the Gold Commission in Geneva released the results of its two-year study. The men in this group were the best experts of Capitalist democracy. They came to the conclusion that the world crisis had come about due to an insufficient amount of gold. If one reads the accounts of this commission, one is amazed about a view which so utterly ignores the laws of living Creation.

Less than ten years later, these same men and their followers declared that the real danger was not a lack, but the overabundance of gold. In other areas as well, opinions changed so quickly, it was almost frightening. After the end of the war in 1918, the City of London had striven with great tenacity towards a stabilisation of currencies. From the beginning of the fall of the pound in 1934, this same organisation did its utmost to destroy such stability altogether.

At a conference in 1933 in London, Holland made a pact with a couple of other countries to resist these efforts. This so-called "Gold Blockade" resisted Anglo-Saxon assault for three years. In September 1936, however, we received the short end of the stick.

The Dutch guilder was devalued. Those same leaders who had preached the stability of the guilder as their gospel were now happily proclaiming its successful devaluation.

I have cited these examples to stress the confusion that went on in the Capitalist democracies, with their millions of unemployed. In contrast to this, the new Europe does not put forward any new doctrines. It just restores the ancient wisdom of our forefathers as it existed before Capitalist disintegration of our nations.

Not the larger or smaller amount of gold it possesses, but labour alone is the basis for the welfare of a nation. Not pleading on international markets for the sale of national produce, but the self-sufficiency of the nation—at least as far as essential goods are concerned—is the foundation for a sound budget in the new Europe. Not economic ties with faraway countries, but the solid co-operation of nations of the same race. This is the program for the developing European new ordering of national economies.

This macrosphere economy is developing with the elementary power of a natural phenomenon. Four macrospheres are already discernible, to wit:

- ***America***
- ***The emerging nation of Japan in Asia***
- ***Russia***
- ***The New European Order, advancing under German leadership***

In all of these four macrospheres, economic advance is directed more or less towards the south. After a New Order is established in Europe, it will be Africa's turn to be included in the European economic system.

Holland finds itself at the centre of all these events. It can isolate itself, or it can play an important part in this new European arrangement. If Holland does not do the latter, then the construction of Europe will be undertaken by others over the heads of our nation. Such a thing would be beneath us. It makes

no sense to give up this task as hopeless or cry about lost overseas possessions, which were of no use during the war anyway. Up until the time that peace arrives, we have a chance to secure our place in the new European order. With this, we will be serving our country. We can only keep it alive by acting in this manner. In this way, we can bring hope to the hearts of hundreds of thousands of workers in our country.

It has now been 300 years since Holland turned away from Central Europe, with its separation from Germany at the Peace of Münster in 1648. At that time, disastrous religious wars had ruined the German Reich, reducing it's people to just four million. Since that time we have been orientated towards the sea, putting ourselves under the now-collapsing British Empire for the last three centuries. The return to a flourishing Reich, which now has not four, but eighty-five million people, living and working, is not just some new development. It is simply the renewal of a union that existed for a thousand years before our separation in 1648.

In the last few weeks we have witnessed the wonders of economic renewal in one of the German-held areas, the land around the Danube and in the Balkans. The development of a new European macrosphere does not mean that we will always remain separated from other global regions. On the contrary, the development that foreign goods and trade possibilities will assume after the war will grow stronger and stronger. Even more so, insofar as the new European economic order has already been established during the war.

Every organisation in our country has to take this task seriously. And since the Bank of the Netherlands is being entrusted to my leadership, I must also do so. Besides this general task, it is the duty of the bank to devote itself to working people. It must reject the sterile illusion of gold. In contrast to the fluctuating opinions of those Capitalist economic leaders mentioned above, I am convinced that the main duty of our bank is to preserve the stability of our currency. Each devaluation of the guilder means a weakening of the ability to purchase. This affects the existence of every individual.

Monetary stability can only be maintained through complete devotion of the working man. The value of money should not be based on the amount of gold, but rather on the production of goods a nation needs to take care of itself.

It goes without saying that in this time of war, a great deal of labour is involved in the production of war materials. Despite this, however, the production of essential consumer items is still possible, especially in a country like ours, where so many unemployed are still anxious to find work.

Just recently a commission of renowned agricultural experts has started working toward a rapid rise in production. One example may show how we can build ourselves back up. The strength of the entire nation is needed, all the more since we are burdened with a difficult inheritance.

But how was the situation in the Netherlands on May 10, 1940? The floating debt was 0.5 million, with total state debt of 4.1 Million. Add to this the debt from the Dutch East Indies in the amount of 1.1 Million, as well as the debt of the different provinces and municipalities in the amount of 2.5 million. Altogether, it reached the sum of nearly eight million. **Our budget started hitting almost 2,000,000,000 Dutch guilders before the German invasion on May 10.** The economy had shrunk, because by then our overseas connections had already been disrupted.

Without tiring I have fought against these methods, both inside and outside of Parliament. It is strange that those who were responsible for the devaluation of the guilder in 1936 now portray themselves as opponents of the inflation they have caused. If they are now trying to make *me* feel responsible for *their* methods, I can only shrug off all such slander. Economic order is based upon a relentless maintenance of proper budgeting in public financial institutions. Truly, those responsible for the financial problems of the past cannot now lay claim to that wisdom which underlies a proper national economy.

I can assure those people, who in the past have been so careless in their methods, that I will do my best to ensure the stability of our money, no matter how deeply I have to cut. On the other

hand, it would be stupid to deny that the conditions of wartime put a greater strain on the budget. But here the above-mentioned development of a European economic sphere will come to our aid.

The linking of the Dutch guilder and the Reichsmark is a new element of strength, especially since the Reichsmark is turning into a European currency. It is surprising to see how the mark, which was one of the most endangered currencies in 1933, regained its strength, because of the devoted effort of the German worker. It has now become a stable currency, one which is capable of backing up the other European currencies.

Thus, you see what can be accomplished by a nation which believes in its own strength. In the eighteenth century it was Amsterdam, which formed the centre of European finance. In the nineteenth century London gained that position. During this war we are witnessing how Berlin is turning into the centre of the financial world.

Many times before the Dutch have shown what they are capable of. They should now know how to overcome their difficulties, by instilling in every working man and woman the belief in a new and better time. In this service to our nation, the Bank of the Netherlands is one of the work communities. But it has to be a close community, one in which everyone recognises those duties and responsibilities entrusted to him by the nation. Each of us who is filled with a will to serve will gain the gratitude of his nation in the fulfilment of these duties.

The Bank of the Netherlands is no place for political quarrels. It is one of the most important institutions of our nation. Those who want to withdraw from this service to our people, using political motives as their excuse, put themselves outside the community of our folk. They themselves will have to bear the consequences. This responsibility towards our nation demands loyal co-operation with the occupying powers. The occupation of a country is an internationally recognised situation. Those who still believe in a re-emergence of the Capitalist world shall be left in peace, so long as they faithfully fulfil their duties. The Dutch people are in a great spiritual crisis. As mentioned above, I be-

lieve that every one of us will have to find his own way into the future.

We can be good companions to those whose souls are in a state of shock. We can show patience and understanding for their difficulties, hoping that one day they, too, will be able to acknowledge the greatness of this time. Hopefully, their lust for life will then return. No one, however, can expect that our understanding here can go so far as to make us neglect our dunes.

It is my wish that all individuals working in this bank shall work together as models for our nation; that despite present difficulties in this venerable institution, there will one day emerge a closely-knit working community for the benefit of our nation.

It will be my most sincere ambition to fulfil my duties at the Bank of the Netherlands in this spirit. After all, every Dutchman who loves his people is filled with a desire to see them happy again. Wishing that this will soon be the case again, I conclude this statement.

M.M. Rost van Tonningen

The director of the Bank of the Netherlands at this time was Jan Robertson. He declared this speech to be a work of art. Here is a passage from a letter that Robertson wrote after the war:

Rost van Tonningen thought highly of many influential Dutchmen who held important positions in commerce and banking. He expected their help and sup for the difficult task of restoring international relations after the war. He was convinced that this would not be easy and could not be accomplished without a fight. He was also convinced that we would be successful in the end.

Once the Germans wanted to make some financial reforms, which I successfully opposed. Rost van Tonningen then said to me: "Oh well, Jan, right now we don't have too much trouble. Our real problems will come after the war".

During a conversation with H. Hintze, an employee of the R. Mees en Zoonen, I found that all the Dutch bankers had listened to Rost van Tonningen's speech intently and approved it.

Rost van Tonningen did not have anything to do with elimination of the Dutch-German currency-exchange border. Dr. Trip was the person responsible

for that. We were both completely taken by surprise. From the German side, Dr. Bühler strongly opposed the move.

Not only did Rost van Tonningen make his views known in his speech, but also at the 1942year-end report and in his opposition, as told in the book Repression and Resistance: The Netherlands in War Time, Part 2. *His resistance against rising Dutch contributions and the special position the Germans put us in were the only right thing to do.*

Concerning relations between Rost van Tonningen and Dr. Hirschfeld, I can remember what he said about Hirschfeld's approval of the plan to fight off Allied attack along the Dutch coast. This was in regard to a series of bunkers, buildings and barricades along the Dutch and Belgian shoreline. Holland had to cover the cost for Belgium as well Rost van Tonningen was outraged about this acceptance by Hirschfeld.

Hans M. Hirschfeld was a full-blooded jew, who enjoyed the protection of Goring. In Hirschfeld's book Remembering the Occupation Period, *I did not find anything about this. I cannot take this book seriously, anyway. It consists of too many tasteless reports on Rost van Tonningen, Understandable, if you consider the fact that Rost van Tonningen became the perfect target after his death. In the post-war period it made a good impression on many people when one named Rost van Tonningen as one's enemy. Especially if one's own deeds had not been too glorious during the war.*

Jan Robertson,
Director of the Bank of the Netherlands

The difficult relationship between my husband and Mussert had its roots in the fact that my husband came from a very good family, went to an international school and was fluent in three languages, other than Dutch. Mussert, on the other hand, hardly knew any foreign language. He had seldom been out of his own country, and on top of it all, had married his own aunt. All these facts made him feel inferior. He was afraid of my husband's sharp mind. When General Commissioner Schmidt realised this, he used it to his own political advantage. He purposely drove a wedge between Mussert and my husband. He made Mussert believe that he was his true friend, who would stand by him against this "upper dog" Rost van Tonningen. Since he was in no position to criticise my husband—inasmuch as his capability was known throughout the nation—a stick to beat the

dog had to be found. This stick was the accusation that Rost van Tonningen had some mixed blood in him. With this he ignored the fact that my husband had a first-class *SS* wedding and had to show his family documents in order to marry. I think my husband was always loyal to Mussert. Mussert, however, wanted to get rid of my husband. This I believe from the bottom of my heart.

Another point I want to address is the request by Himmler for my husband to take over the leadership position in the Netherlands. Before the war, my brother Wim, Feldmeyer and I were bonded by our work in the *Jeugdstorm.* Other members of our group were Wim van Heemskerk-Duker, van Houten, Nico de Haas, Conrad Nachenius, and others. Feldmeyer thought that I should have married one of the group. Even so, he got his job as *SS* leader because of my husband's friendship with Himmler. But instead of Feldmeyer being grateful, he remained jealous. He was sent to the Eastern Front, to prove himself a capable officer of the *SS.* This was also meant to improve his status as *SS* leader in the Netherlands.

In a letter to R. Jungclaus on November 24, 1941, my husband wrote:

> I *emphatically say my SS men. Having fought for years for the folkish ideal and the Greater Germanic idea, I claim the right to say that I laid the foundation for the SS in the Netherlands.*

My husband always said to me: "Oh, Florelore, tall trees catch a lot of wind. We shouldn't be bothered by it."

What the outside world does not know is the fact that my husband would have received one of the highest positions in the *SS* after a German victory. Hitler and Himmler had promised this to him.



SS Leader H.A. Rauter

Chapter Five

Our Family Grows

The War Years, Part Two

5.1 A Son Is Born

You are not today, and you are not tomorrow,
You are a thousand years before you and
A thousand years after you.
A thousand years before you have watched over
Your blood, to make you the way you are.
Watch over your blood, that those
Coming generations a thousand years
After you will bless you.
This is the meaning of life,
That God awakens in our blood.
But only in the purity of your blood
Can God be found.

A Son Is Born to Us
MEINOUD GRIMBERT
Florrie Rost van Tonningen-Heubel
Dr. M.M. Rost van Tonningen, LL.M
The Hague, Nieuwe Parklaan 96
November 1, Slaughter Month 1941

Copy of the birth certificate in the registrar's office of the municipality of The Hague, Rep. Nr. 1286, Cert. Nr. A 3674:

Today, November 1,1941, there appeared before me, registrar of the municipality of The Hague,

ROST VAN TONNINGEN, **Meinoud Marinus, president of the Bank of the Netherlands, general secretary of the Finance Department, aged forty-seven, local resident;**

Declaring that today, at 4:27 AM **in this municipality, Nieuwe Parklaan 96, a child was born of the male sex by his wife HEUBEL, Florentine Sophie, without employment, local resident.**

The child was given the following first names:

MEINOUD GRIMBERT

This certificate was written under the law.

Signed:

Boekhout

Rost van Tonningen

The Hague, November 1,1941

We received many congratulations, letters, telegrams, flowers and gifts, among them a beautiful painting from Hitler, depicting an eagle floating above the mountains, and a *Lebensleuchter* from Himmler.

We also received a wonderful card from Karl Wolff:

WOLFF

SS Troop Leader and Lieutenant-General of the Waffen-SS" Chief of the personal staff of Reichsführer *SS*

will be the godfather Best

wishes and Heil Hitler!

Yours, Karl Wolff

Berlin SW 11 Prinz Albrecht Str. 8

Along with this card came an *SS* sponsorship set of silverware and a beautiful sponsorship cup.

Touching, also, was the visit the next day of Bruns van Houten. He came in *SS* uniform, with a single rose in his hand. He put the rose in the cradle, saying:

"Dear Grimbert, I am leaving for the front to fight Bolshevism. I am fighting for you, your father and mother, and for all of Germania. Heil Hitler!" Three months later this brave young man, only 20 years old, fell at the Eastern Front.

A little while later, Wim was promoted *SS Obersturmführer* of the Germanic *SS.* Along with this came a ceremonial presentation of the Iron Cross Second Class for his combat on the Eastern Front. Heil, my dearly beloved brother Wim.

But now a funny message—my husband was presented with an award as well:

> **Dear Sir,**
>
> **Are you aware that you have a birthday? Not the usual kind of birthday that repeats itself every year, but a special birthday, that will come only ONCE in your lifetime: It's your '4711' birthday.**
>
> **On this festive day, you are 47 years and 11 months old. This is your very own 4711 day. On this occasion 4711 would like to be present to congratulate you in the form of a gift package.**
>
> **With 4711 greetings,**
> **Amsterdam, Frederiksplein 51**
> **February 19,1942**

[In Germany, 4711 is a very famous series of *Eau de Toilet,* soap, and aftershave.]

5.2 The Tenth Anniversary of the NSB

The discord between all the major and minor parties in the Netherlands was very great. In Germany the war was taking on a more serious aspect. As in our country, the fight against Bolshevism stood above all other events and relations in Europe.

At this time the *Nationaal Socialistische Beweging* celebrated its ten-year fight for National Socialism in the Netherlands from 1931 to December 14,1941.

On October 22, 1941, my husband wrote the following letter to the leader of the NSB, Anton Mussert:

Leader:

On September 14 the Office for Combat and Sacrifice sent me a form to complete. On October 18 I received a second notice, in which I was asked to return the completed form before the end of the week. The reason for this is obviously to recommend persons for the Five-Year Medal award, in as far as they have shown themselves worthy of it.

For some of the old party members it may be necessary to send out such questionnaires. But you will have to bear with me that I am not inclined to list my sacrifices in order to receive such an award. These I consider well known.

But I have to ask you, as leader of our movement, a few things:

Do I have to remind you that I left the position I had in Vienna? This I did for the establishment of our paper, Het Nationale Dagblad, *which you so urgently required.*

Do I have to explain that my old mother and I used up our last savings, limiting our expenses so that we did not have to ask too much financial assistance from the movement?

Do you want to hear that I had enough business experience to take on the publishing of our newspaper, knowing full well that it was set up without sufficient funding under supervision of a director who was unsuitable for the job, and who had to be dismissed within a year to save the paper from bankruptcy? A daily paper without any proper journalistic or administrative staff?

I put my most valuable asset on the line my name. This I put at stake in the most dramatic political action involving the NSB since I joined: the Oss affair. [Oss is an industrial town in the southern part of the Netherlands.] *For the principle that our children should be safe from abuse by homosexual priests, I fought ALONE, against opposition in the movement involving Catholic intellectuals. Against an organised campaign of defamation, against all political parties, I brought on eight investigations, which were prosecuted in all instances. I was thrown out of Parliament twice. I travelled up and down the country, stirring the people up, finally bringing down the minister of justice, Goseling, this lackey of a criminal priesthood. After the German invasion it was Goseling's revenge, as reserve officer of the general staff, to have me arrested first of all the men in the movement. This arrest left me unable to defend myself against underhanded attacks by my adversaries. I was even stabbed in the back by comrades who still hold high positions in the movement.*

Do you remember my work in Parliament? Do you remember the many attacks against it from our own political bureau? The attacks led by Brucken Fock, which so miserably failed and made you realise how unreasonable they were? This took a lot of hard work, including many a sleepless night.

Do I have to remind you again—although probably in vain—how I tried to keep Germany's appreciation for our movement after we lost the election in 1937?

How I managed to procure inexpensive paper for our newspaper in Berlin, after a previous request by Chevalier and van Houten had been denied? That Mr. Wickel later told d'Ansembourg that he would have had me thrown out if it had been his decision to make? Later I again travelled to gather German advertisements and German readers for our paper.

During a time in which all friendly acts of the Germans toward the NSB were looked upon as treacherous actions by the government in The Hague, I made it possible for you to secure an appointment with von Ribbentrop after I got Himmler to convince him to do so. I brought you in contact with the Reichsführer *myself.*

After strong resistance, I managed to secure the publication of your plan for a Jewish homeland in the German press. [The NSB sought the creation of a Jewish homeland in Madagascar.] *This is old and musty history now, like the endless canvassing in Rotterdam, when growing danger diminished our ranks.*

Then is no use in repeating old stories, especially if esteem is lacking and slander is used as a means of obstructing a direction I have stood for with all my

integrity. With this letter I would rather try to find a way to secure our future. The Dutch nation and our movement are in a state of crisis due to the lost war against the German invader. The defeat has caused a lot of insecurity among our people. The assistance our movement has received from the German leaders made each gathering of strength a misuse of power in the eyes of the nation.

The movement itself is torn apart. It started with the Diets, or All-Netherlandish, program, which turned towards the Flemish south for years. Now, all at once, it is confronted with Adolf Hitler and the NSDAP. After May 10, they saw the first men picking up their weapons to do their duty in the SS, and often couldn't understand this. Resistance grew against this. There was a tendency to stamp as a traitor anyone who promoted the idea of the SS and front service. A certain de Haas—who was thrown out of the NVV because of embezzlement—openly insulted Woudenberg and myself and got away with it. This insult was not punished by either Geelkerken or the then-leader of the CID. Your advice to do so was disregarded. This is not just history to me.

What will happen to my position within the movement if things stay this way? You yourself accepted the Führer as your leader and the leader of all the Germanic countries. You yourself administered the oath of loyalty to the Führer to our WA Men. Even a year ago, this would have caused a lot of strife. This move toward a pan-Germanic position is gratifying. It is also a duty toward our dead comrades, who fell at the front after swearing loyalty to the Führer. These men fell for the community of Germanic peoples and for their Führer. They were inspired by their belief in the eternity of their nation and the sacredness of the laws of their blood. These men who gave their lives command the respect of our enemies.

I can understand it if, with this form,you are now gathering together those old comrades who already stood up for their belief before May 10, and who are now too old to renew their dedication at the front. But I cannot understand why you now allow this development to be slandered and defamed—to let those, who by their unshakeable dedication formed the vanguard toward the Führer, be hounded as fair game.

Now, about the second point of the questionnaire: Do you stand squarely behind Mussert? It would be cowardly and without honour not to answer truthfully. The facts—which I am about to mention—will speak for themselves.

I, among others, have been at the centre of the struggle mentioned above—not because I desired it, but because my belief and dedication put me there. Since I

am writing this letter with the intent of coming to an understanding, I ask you to consider the following in that sense.

I turned to National Socialism after witnessing the heroic fight of the Austrians, and after reading Mein Kampf *in a single night. I found in this book everything I had hoped for in my entire life. Everything I had slowly come to believe over a period of years was written down there. Since then I have dedicated my life to this belief.*

My joining the NSB, and thereby accepting your leadership, was a decision of deep seriousness. I believed it to be my duty as a Dutchman to serve my country within a Dutch movement. But I was also certain that my inner beliefs were far from those of the NSB.

I gave my oath of loyalty upon entering the NSB, and I have always tried to stand by it, no matter how great the difficulties. This vow still stands, and ***in the future my attitude will be as it was before.*** *Should, however, any conflict ever occur with the worldview of the* Führer, *then I will openly confer with you—just as I have always done. Of course, all decisions will remain with you, as our leader. You will understand that such a conflict with Hitler's outlook may put me in a difficult situation. But I hope that sooner or later the NSB will come to terms with his view. This would be a relief for me.*

At this point I should like to let bygones be bygones. You know about the confrontations I had trying to defend our principles. Comrades such as Roskam and Woudenberg, and many others, also fought hard for them. You know that it was the Jewish question especially that gave rise to serious conflict within the political council, notably with Comrade van Geelkerken. Eventually, a first step was taken with the exclusion of Jews from our movement. This was announced in your speech of December 1938, which caused great joy in our ranks.

The invasion of our country jolted our movement out of its slow development toward the Führer's *worldview. The remaining Jews and Freemasons were expelled from the movement. This made my inner struggle a lot easier. During my captivity a countermove began, the reasons for which I can only speculate on. This was accompanied with an appeal in the government press to keep a distance from me. Something like that could easily be suspected from Goseling and his cronies.*

The following day Hardaffie came to you with the statement that I had tried to undermine your position. This he was made to say by a police officer of the very same government which asked the movement to betray me. The demand by Woudenberg to start vigorous action in Parliament proclaiming the solidarity of

the movement with its captured comrades was denied, with the vile comment that we might have committed treasonous acts against our nation. Het Nationale Dagblad *was not allowed to write about me. And when I came back sick from captivity, Feldmeyer was told that he was no longer leader of the Mussert Guard, while I discovered that De Marchant et d'Ansembourg had taken over my job as commissioner for relations with Germany. After a while I found out that you had stated in a report to the German government that I had undermined your position there.*

On the eve of my return from captivity this was all still unknown to me. I was surprised to be picked up by car and taken to the Reichsführer *and Reich Commissioner. There I explained that I could not make any statements about these matters before having spoken with you. This took place the next day. You yourself spoke to me about this as evidence of loyalty.*

In the interest of our movement, I was the first to appear in the streets with a uniformed troop. With this I broke all sorts of laws, which I finally managed to have abolished after many a fierce street battle.

What this new commissioner d'Ansembourg could not manage, I arranged for you, namely the means of transport to the Party Day in Lanteren. As a result I was given command of the WA [Weerafdeling, Defence Division], *which helped me to accomplish the results mentioned above.*

Finally, a well-organised campaign began against my ancestry. The accusers made sure that they remained anonymous. It is everyone's right to investigate whether leading individuals in a National Socialist movement are of honourable blood. I myself understood this way back in 1936. First with limited means, but especially after starting my position at the Bank of the Netherlands, I did every thing possible to clear up the question of my ancestry. I managed to do this to an extent that few movement functionaries could boast.

Since I refused to be the only one having his family tree investigated, I asked that all other leaders be investigated as well This could be done within a short period of time. If this does not happen, then I have to say that the question of whether I am of Aryan blood is meaningless.

The whispering campaign against my background is the result of a campaign of hate directed against me by those who want to take attention away from their own mixed bloodlines. My mother—who as an old woman still serves the NSB—and my father are insulted.

But let us leave these personal things and concentrate on essential matters. I can quietly bide my time as dilettantes and slanderers try to mess around with my

family tree. Several individuals with Jewish blood have already been discovered within the leadership of our movement. Growing doubts and indications that some of our leaders are part Jewish go against the fundamentals of our movement. It makes a mockery of our principles and all of our actions against the Jews. Rumours are spreading, making the movement vulnerable.

I now come to the future and to the task of our movement. At the moment the political situation in the Netherlands is like this:

The representatives of the National Socialist idea an the NSB and the NSDAP. The NSDAP/Section Netherlands is part of an organisation which is eventually to extend over the entire Germanic area. It will probably be represented by the VDA [Volksdeutsche Ausland = Ethnic Germans Abroad] in allEuropean states. The party insignia of the NSDAP will be opening doors throughout the Continent. With the ethnic-German concept, more than 40,000 children in the Netherlands will soon be taken into this community, along with their parents. The NSDAP organisation in the Netherlands is spreading rapidly, and the number of its members is steadily growing. 'Behind the party and its secondary organisations lie the strength and experience of the NSDAP in Germany. The party is imbued with the worldview of the Führer

It *isn't clear to me, nor probably to many others, how the relationship between the NSB and the NSDAP will develop. Contacts are forming in all spheres. I do not want to bother you with examples of collaboration between our* Jeugdstorm *and the German* Hitlerjugend *or our respective National Socialist women's organisations. You are involved with this on a daily basis.*

I want to come back to my own field of responsibility: the economy. Here we are becoming more and more as one with the German Reich. In this context I want to see realised a recognition and respect of the Dutch within the greater Germanic area. A good deal of business in Holland has, in the course ofAryanisation, fallen into the hands of German managers. I find myself in conflict here, because some comrades who had aspired to such positions themselves are attacking me. Since many of them do not have the necessary funds, I am trying to arrange credit for them.

The balance of power in the Netherlands at the moment is such that our party is bound to disappoint many. The NSDAP will get precedence. Hopefully, Comrade Gips and I will shortly be able to present you with a few ideas. Perhaps it would be wise to discuss the situation with General Commissioner Schmidt and General Commissioner Wimmer, now that Minister Fischbock is leaving.

With this, I have digressed into a field that I am familiar with and where I think we are likely to see conflict arise between the NSB and the NSDAP.

But it is like this in all areas. I could cite numerous examples. One thing is undeniable, however one can see the organisational ability and financial strength of the NSDAP everywhere.

I now come to the NSB. It is our movement. You are its leader. As you said, you recognise Hitler as leader of all Germanic peoples, the head of-our community. How do you expect the relationship between the Dutch people and our movement to develop? And what about the relationship between the people and the NSDAP? As I told you before, our people have been kept in the dark about our movement through a conspiracy of silence. They don't know about our fight before May 10 against the superior forces of our enemies.

Those Dutchmen who now repent and want to join a National Socialist party—unfortunately then will be many opportunists among them—will have a choice between the NSB and, if they have a few German ancestors, the NSDAP. If they enter the NSDAP as Volksdeutsche, they will receive all the rights a German has on the European continent, while still retaining their Dutch nationality. Adolf Hitler would be their Führer. *But if they choose the NSB, they would still acknowledge Hitler as their leader. It is in the interest of National Socialism that our people—if we want to win them for our beliefs—not get an impression of competition between the NSB and the NSDAP. The more clearly our ideal is presented, the quicker we will reach our goal.*

How much this is of concern to our members may be seen from the following. One of our oldest and staunchest fighters recently told me: "If we fail to allow the Dutch an opportunity to fulfil their role as full-fledged partners of Germany, then complete annexation would have been better. Equal rights would then have followed as a matter of course ".

I do not want to digress any further at this time, but would like to have a personal meeting. If I can contribute in any way to the unity of our movement, I will gladly do so. Hoping you will accept this letter as an honest effort toward positive collaboration, I sign off with

Hou Zee,

M.M. Rost van Tonningen

To end competition among the various small National Socialist factions, the Germans had no choice but to accept the NSB as the sole National Socialist movement in the Netherlands. On December

10, 1941, Mussert gave his oath of allegiance to the *Führer,* and on December 14 the NSB was officially recognised as the only National Socialist party in the Netherlands.

On May 17, 1942, the first of our *SS* men swore their allegiance to the *Führer* in the presence of Himmler. There was a solemn mood, and Himmler gave a beautiful speech.

A letter from M.M. Rost van Tonningen to A.A. Mussert, The Hague, December 13,1941:

Leader.

The historic moment in Berlin, when you gave your oath of loyalty to the Führer, *coincided with the 10th anniversary of our movement. And all of this is happening in one of the most critical periods in the history of our nation.*

I want to wish you all the best in your difficult task in the reconstruction of our fatherland. This task will be all the more difficult, as we are threatened with having our colonies taken from us. I hope that with our movement you will be able to unite our people within the greater community of Germanic peoples.

It is a cause for great joy that you so solemnly fastened the bond between our movement and the Führer *of all Germanic peoples. I myself have travelled the same path on my way to National Socialism. I hope that everyone in and outside the movement will follow the same course and help you in all possible ways to accomplish your task.*

Hou Zee!

M.M. Rost van Tonningen

My husband had come to an understanding with Hitler that his oath of allegiance to Hitler should 'come before the oath which he had given to Mussert. Because of this, my husband wrote the clause *"As long as Hitler is alive...* "in many of his documents.

At the beginning of 1942 the demands of the German coastal defence became such that not only the village of Scheveningen, but also the entire western part of The Hague had to be evacuated. My husband and I had to leave our beloved home with our little son. We then moved to the parental home of the van Haren Nomans on Riouwstraat 216. There my grandmother lived alone with her servant Christian, a former attendant at the royal palace. My grandmother moved in with her daughter in Hilversum, and we took over the

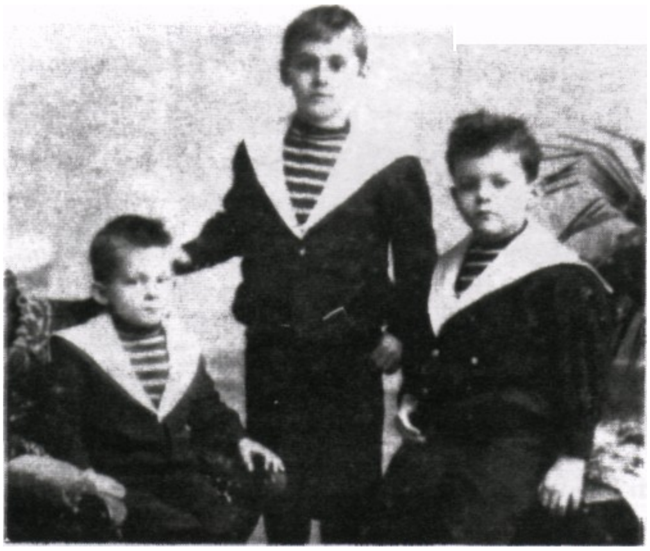
house with the servant. It was very useful for us to have Christian, because we had to give many receptions and dinner parties. This wonderful house, where my husband and I once lived so very happily, now houses the Spanish embassy. For my husband and me the time we spent in this ancestral home may well have been the happiest of our lives.

For well-known NSB members it was a difficult period, however. The Resistance assassinated many highly placed people, including General Seyffardt, Dr. Reydon and his wife, Dr. Posthuma, and others. My husband and I were also on their death list. For this reason it was decided that we should have a guard, who was to be from the *ATL (Algemene Toezicht Leden,* or General Surveillance Members, of the NSB.)

My husband happened to be away from home the first night that the ATL guarded our house. The next day Mussert called asking us why we had a big portrait of Hitler on our mantelpiece—which we had received from the *Führer* personally—but not one of *him,* our leader. When my husband came home, he became so angry that he immediately threw the ATL guard out. We asked *SS* leader Rauter to handle our protection after that.

Who could then describe my surprise when, sitting quietly in my room, I saw twelve members of the secret police commandeering my home. They went marching through the house, and every two hours all rooms, including the bedroom, were checked for bombs. I again called Rauter and told him that this kind of protection was really too much of a good thing, and in a way even worse than protection by the ATL man. Now our private life was being invaded. "But Frau Florrie," Rauter exclaimed, "I did everything I could. What now...?" Within a few days it was decreed that every high official was to have personal bodyguards. We got a total of eight, because my husband and I were Nr. 1 and Nr. 2, respectively, on the death list. All ordinary NSB officials received a shotgun for their personal defence.





Meinoud, Nico and Wim Rost van Tonningen In
the Dutch East Indies



Florrie at four years of age



The Heubel family in 1840;
Grandfather and Great-grandfather



Kol family home in Utrecht,
With Vlaer & Kol offices on its right



De Breul House in Zeist,
Home of my Great-grandfather Jan Kol



Florrie Heubel
Out hunting in the Dutch East Indies



Paul Franck, Florrie Heubel and Max Bartels
After shooting a black panther



Dr. M.M. Rost *van* Tonningen



F.S. Host *van* Tonningen-Heubel



My brother Wim



My father-in-law
M.B. Rost van Tonningen



Count van den Bosch
Governor General of the Dutch East Indies



My wedding-present



A Dutch bank'note with my husband'signature



Painted by F.S. Rost van Tonningen



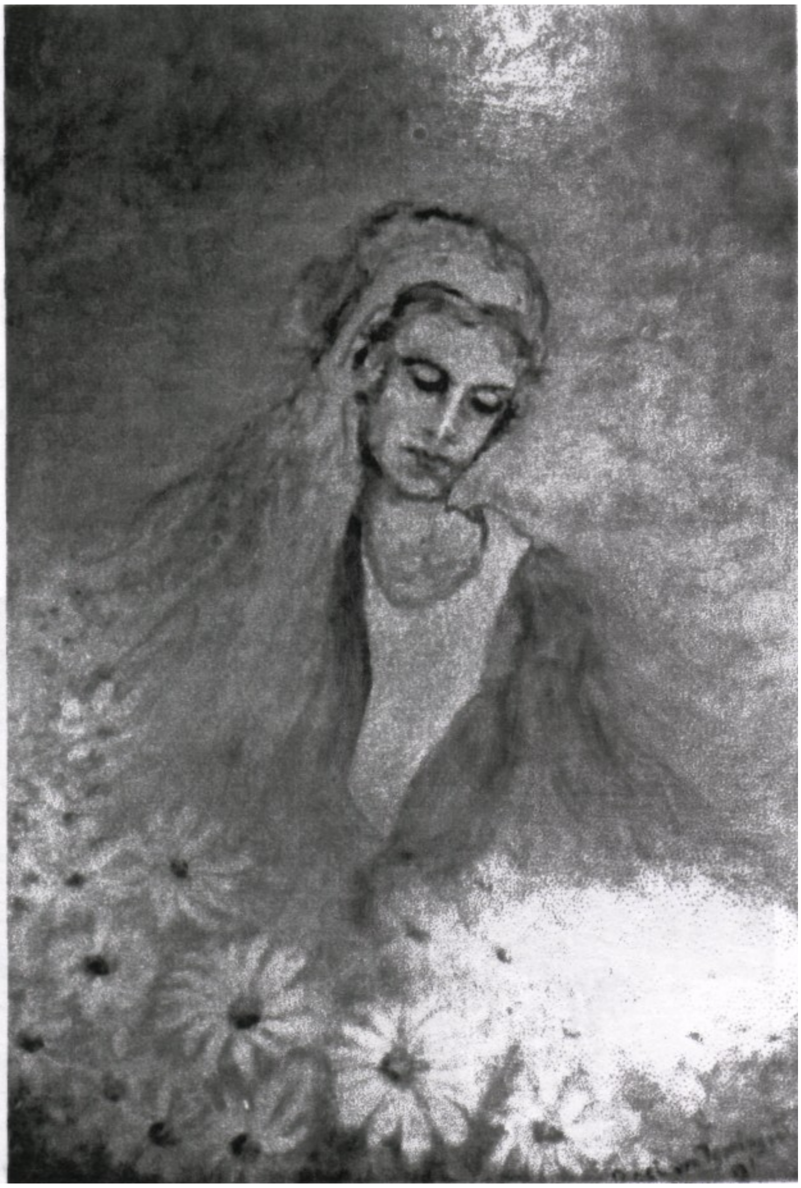
Tree of Life with Wedding Ring Painted by F.S. Rost van Tonningen



F.S. Rost van Tonningen
Painted by Bobeldijk



My *Life*
Painted by F.S. Rost van Tonningen



Ostara (Asa)
Painted by F.S. Rost van Tonningen

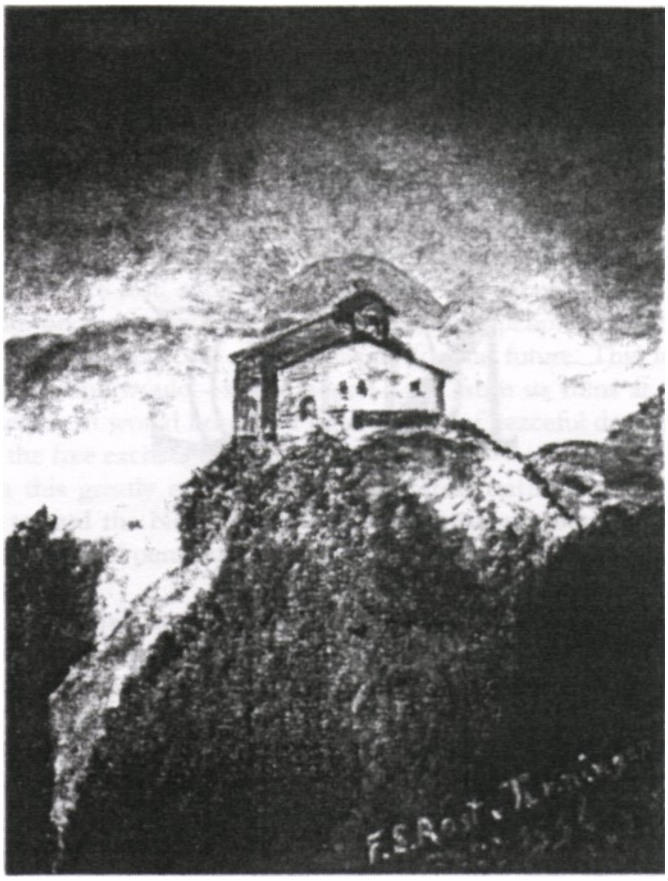


" Dandelions "
painted by F.S.Rost van Tonningen



The Sea Gull
painted by F.S.Rost van Tonningen

THE LIGHT



The Eagle' Nest
painted by F.S.Rost van Tonningen

N C

5.3 The *Nederlandsche Oost Compagnie*

We were of the opinion that the economic efforts of the Netherlands should be on a basis of equality with the German Reich. *Reichsministcr* Rosenberg as well as *Reichsmarschall* Göring supported this idea. My husband was of the opinion that our nation should not accept the hard blows of fete without doing something about it. Our colonies were lost, and overseas commerce was cut off. We wanted to *take* on the heavy task imposed upon our people, and acknowledge all that was good and promising for the future. This torn, divided Europe would—so we hoped—rise from its ruins at the end of the war. It would become a great sphere of peaceful development, with the free exchange of goods.

In this greatly expanded European area, traffic would naturally flow toward the Netherlands, this natural gateway between Brittany and the Jutland peninsula. This would bring our harbours to renewed prosperity.

It would be unworthy simply to accept this resurgence as a gift from God. We wanted rather to earn our position in the new Europe by our active participation during wartime.

The *Ncderlandscbe Oost Compagnie (NOC),* or Dutch East Company, was founded on June 6,1942. At this time the rebuilding of Eastern Europe, freed from the Bolshevik yoke, was our prime task. The economic development of these areas was, in view of the suffering of its peoples, a command of humanity. This was, in our opinion, an effort in which every Dutch person—regardless of political persuasion—could participate.

There were many different ideas on how these eastern countries should be incorporated into the European economy, but a clear-cut strategy was still lacking. On the one hand, it was suggested that the East should not be industrialised, but produce raw materials for European industry. On the other hand, the actual purpose of *our*

involvement in this undertaking was the relocation to these areas of those Dutch firms suffering from a lack of demand at home.

Rost van Tonningen opposed the former concept with all his might. He saw that concentrated industrialisation of European coastal areas would inevitably lead to an even greater rural flight. The industrial development of England should have served as a serious warning.

We should not need to mention this problem, if it hadn't been for some interesting cases. For example, there was the proposed relocation of oil refineries and textile industries, where offers made by us were turned down.

The German government, as well as we ourselves, clearly saw that during wartime the economic situation could not be considered normal. The risks of economic ventures in the East were far more dangerous than any peacetime enterprise. We knew that we would encounter resistance in many leading Anglophile circles, but that we would also encounter much interest.

At first the Germans suggested that we play upon the self-interest of leading Dutch business circles, through promises of high profits. They stressed that any Dutch efforts in Eastern Europe should be reciprocated by a profitable return. This, however, was not always the case.

During the remainder of the war it appeared that, despite the dedication and interest of many Dutch firms and experts, there was one weak point. These people had to venture into these countries unarmed, making them easy targets for ever-increasing partisan attack. Despite all efforts by my husband to supply them with guns, the Germans would not allow this. Throughout the war, the NOC was doomed to failure. The closer the frontline came, the more difficult it became for its leaders. Finally, they had to give themselves up to the Allies.

Members of the NOC were, among others:

Dr. D. Krantz, Ir. P. Heerema, Ir. C. Staf, P. van Leeuwen Boonkamp, A.C. van Maasdijk, Ir. F.E. Miiller, EJ. Voûte, Dr. C.W. Zahn, F.B.J. Gips, Dr. L.P. Krantz, Ir. E. van Dieren, F.L. Rambonnet, G.J. Ruyter, W.T. Robertson, A.A. Hofman Sr., P.H. Hoekstra,

D. Blankenvoort, EJ. Cool, J. van Hoey Smith, **P.J. Tack, and** many more—**all** of **them** high Dutch functionaries.

Especially because of all the wartime limitations, my husband and I tried to do our best to help our co-workers with their problems. Ever so often we had private get-togethers with friends and comrades at our house, where about 100 people were invited. This was particularly important because so many of our people had lost loved ones at the front. One should not forget that the Dutch formed the largest non-German contingent of volunteers in the fight against Bolshevism: 60,000 men all together, many of whom never returned.

One of these gatherings was on the Midwinter Solstice of 1942. The following is a recollection by our dear friend, A. de Brune, who lost two sons at the front

We were invited to a festivity at Rost van Tonningen's house. We knew that a celebration at the Rost van Tonningen's would not be a noisy affair, but a quiet celebration in remembrance of our ancestors. So we went, filled with expectation and curiosity. In the hall, which was decorated with green branches, we were welcomed by the hostess. A warm light and the smell of pine filled the house.

Soon we gathered around the beautifully lit Yule tree. This tree was decorated so differently from those modern Christmas trees, with their giant glass balls and gaudy decoration. It was decorated with the signs of the Zodiac and runic symbols like the Odal, Hagal and Siegrunen. And at the top there was a big Sun Wheel. All these different symbols were made out of cake dough. The Tree of Life, likewise made out of cake, could also be seen. The light from the many candles reflected on glossy apples, which were hung on the tree, instead of glass balls. It was a wonderful sight to behold.

But what was this thing, leaning against the tree? A little house made of gingerbread. What was the meaning of this? Soon we were to find out.

Our host opened the celebration with a short speech and then told his wife: "Light the Holy Fire!" The hostess then lit all the candles. Rost van Tonningen said he was glad to see all his co-workers and their families gathered around him. Since he, tike many others, was so busy this time of year, there wasn't much opportunity to get in touch with one another on a personal level But be thought the Yuletide would be an excellent opportunity for this.

Then the hostess took over and told us that this day had to be looked upon as a celebration of the victory of Light over Darkness. On this day the Sun had

reached its lowest point and would now gain strength again. Then she told the story of Hansel and Grete/, with soft piano music playing in the background. Hansel, the little Moon man, and Gretel, the little Sun. On the path to the Gingerbread House stood two lights. In front of one was a little sickle—this was Hansel. In front of the other was a circle with little beams around it—this was Gretel. Now we heard how Hansel gathered little stars, to show him the way home after the mean Winter Woman left them alone in the woods. The second time, when it was much darker, Hansel could not find the stars. Then we heard how a little white bird lured the two to the Gingerbread House. There the Winter Woman captured them. But gradually they gathered new strength and finally vanquished her. A larger Sun and Moon were set in front of the lights, and a great swan came and brought the two back home. A nice story for children, but a tale with a deeper meaning for the older generation: That the Light will always win out in the end.

Then Florrie told another story: All humans and animals were in search of Baldur, the Sun. They thought that he was dead. But one of them felt that he had to be somewhere, and so he carried all the others along with his faith. Finally, they came to the mountains. There they found a little golden child, glowing like the Sun—the Reborn Sun. After they received apples and threads of silver as presents, man and animal ran back home to tell their kindred what they had seen. Thus hope was restored in everyone.

These were two beautiful tales with a deeper truth. Young and old listened attentively. Everyone experienced these stones in his own way. After the children sang a few Yule carols, the ceremonial part of the evening was over.

The hostess then picked up some pine branches from beneath the tree, revealing a gnat heap of presents. There was something for everyone: toys for the children and poems for the adults, written and selected by our hostess.

Then we were asked to go into the adjoining room, where we found yet another surprise. We saw a candlelit table decorated with flowers, laden with cakes, biscuits and sweets. And in front of this stood a large bowl of pea soup, wonderful and tasty! But we found ourselves thinking: how was this possible in a time when everything was so hard to come by? Our hosts read our minds and explained: Comrade Rost van Tonningen had just returned from a trip to the Ukraine. There he was given a package from the first harvest: flour, butter, sugar, etc. From this the hostess had baked everything herself. We felt the greatness of events taking place in Europe, brought home to us in this small gathering.

Our men were still fighting on the 'Eastern Front, and behind the tines everything possible was being done for the salvation of Europe.

The evening proceeded with wonderful food and pleasant conversation. Fi nally, the children were allowed to plunder the Yule tree. Little Grimbert sat comfortably on the lap of Grandmother Rost van Tonningen. She asked me to get something for the little guy. I managed to get a Hagal-rune and gave it to him. He grabbed it with his two little fists and took a bite, looking at me as if to say: 'We understand each other perfectly well. "

Then it was time to say goodbye. We all went home, strengthened by the message that, no matter how deep the Darkness may be, the light will win out in the end.

After the ceremonies were over and the cakes and presents wen passed out, someone said to me: "For many this is the most important part of the evening." This, I thought, was not true, because these cakes and presents will soon be for gotten. But the tree and the stories will always come back in our minds. With every Yule celebration we will remember and relive them again. May our hostess be honoured for all her hard work in making this all possible for us. It was surely one of the most wonderful Yuletides ever celebrated in ~~ou~~piocountry neering work for the enlightenment of our people about the true and honest spirit of the Germanic race.

Heil!

Mrs. A. de Erune-Verker

5.4 The Fourth Year of War for Germania

During the last months of the war the struggle intensified. Under ever-increasing Allied attack, our efforts were stretched to the limit. My husband had been through many perils throughout his life, but he always remained a fighter for his ideals. This should be an obligation to each of us: Listen to your inner voice and, no matter how hard the fall, stand up again.

New orders were issued. Now all of The Hague had to be evacuated. This meant that we had to move again, this time from The

Hague to Amsterdam, Viottastraat 41. My husband had to divide his time between The Hague, Amsterdam and Deventer. With air raids and the pressure of other war-related difficulties, this wasn't easy. Besides, I was expecting my second child. My husband thought deeply about this fourth year of the war, the year his second son was to arrive. He wrote the following sentences for him:

If everything happens as is written in the stars, our child will be born under the sign of Leo, between July 22 and August 23. father and Mother read a book together, the book of your ancestors, where their restlessness is so very well described: the seamen who travelled to America; the privateer who commandeered his ship; the generals who fought in South Africa, India and the Dutch East Indies; the rebellious Scottish officer who stood up against an order of the states of Holland, of which he did not approve; Colonel East van Tonningen, who fought in Napoleon's Guard of Honour at Saragassa; Major Rost van Tonningen who defended the town of Breda against the enemy; and the General Rost van Ton ningen who was honoured for two hard-won military campaigns at Atyeh and Lombok. These are your ancestors, dear child soon ~~to~~ -be born ***fighters*** *and pioneers, restless people who happily gave their fruit for the greatest fight that Germania ever fought.*

As it is written in the ~~Ed~~da "born out of a restless generation, into a restless time, under a restless star".

Your maternal line appears calmer, although your mother herself ventured into the jungle, rifle on her shoulder.

And so we call out to you, little child still to be born: If you are a man, then be ***true*** *-tike your moth~~er~~ if you an a woman, then be* ***brave*** *like your mother. And above all, understand that your life belongs to the greater Germanic tribe, now revived through ~~the~~* **Führer.**

Your father

Meanwhile, the war continued. On the night of July 9-10, 1943, the Americans landed on Sicily. Here they used their secret weapon: *Lucky Luciano.* This Mafia boss, who had been incarcerated in America for many years, was taken out of prison to conquer Sicily for the Americans. In a jeep bearing a yellow flag with a big black "L" written on it, he drove from one Mafia address to the other. Then, after a few days, it happened. The Mafia switched to the American side.

Because of this, the Italian troops on the island surrendered without a fight. The rest of Italy did not give up this easily, though. Many priceless art treasures were lost in the fighting. A famous example is the world's oldest Benedictine monastery, Monte Cassino, which was fought over for many weeks.

Mussolini's opponents conceived a plan to overthrow him on July 25. He was dismissed from office, arrested and taken to a secret location in Italy.

The war in Italy went on and ended with capitulation on September 8, 1943. A few areas in northern Italy, however, were still occupied by German troops. Some weeks before the capitulation, a search was already underway to determine Mussolini's whereabouts. It was **Lieutenant Colonel Otto Skorzeny** who finally freed him on September 12. He was taken to the *Füihrer,* healthy and unharmed. The German people rejoiced. Everyone was convinced that the war would be won. A friend of mine in Goslar witnessed total strangers embracing each other, because Skorzeny had managed to free Mussolini. From that time on, Skorzeny became Germany's hero.

Years after the war I met Skorzeny in the Harz, where we travelled in a bus together. We talked about the war and all its tragedies. Skorzeny was one of our bravest. Besides that, he was a good friend of my brother Wim.

At a dinner party in Amsterdam I was table partner to Himmler. All at once he leaned over to me, asking if my brother Wim was married yet. A little embarrassed, I told him that he wasn't. "What a shame", Himmler muttered, "such a good-looking man and not married." He then gave an order that Wim should get married.

Wim's wedding and the birth of my second son fell on almost the same day in August 1943. My brother wanted to give me time to have my child first, but the little one decided he didn't want to look at the world just yet.

On August 5, 1943, my brother married Ans van den Bergen. They had a beautiful *SS* wedding, with hundreds of *SS* comrades. We had to wait a long time for our second son. Mother got tired of the waiting. Up until the very end I felt him "swimming in the well". I thought to myself, "If he is swimming in my belly like that, maybe

he'll become a sailor like his ancestor Ebbe Raven, who was born on a ship."

Monday, August 23, at 5:07 in the afternoon, our son Ebbe was bom. Flowers and letters arrived by the basketful.

That evening we heard that on the Eastern Front the city of Kharkov had been abandoned by German troops. The fight for Germania continued. Here behind the lines new life was born. We all felt that victory or defeat depended on all of us.

Ebbe was born under the sign of war. May he grow up to be a brave warrior.

5.5 The 1944 Railway Strike and a Winter of Hunger

My husbands lived the life of a centipede. He was continually on the go, with meetings and lectures to attend and business trips to make. He had to dictate letters, make phone calls, and all of this under the pressure of war. He was accustomed to my devotion day and night, but I too had a lot of worries. As wife of the president of the Bank of the Netherlands, much was expected of me. I had to give dinners and receptions, speak with high German officials, and generally run our household, with an ever-increasing number of guests. And then there were my children. I was either pregnant or had a newborn to take care of.

My children's diet was very important to me. To have a reliable milk supply I asked one of the guards to find a good milk goat for me. In the meantime we had to move again, this time from Schalk-haar to Diepenveen, because the house which had been requisitioned for us was given back to its former owner, a sausage manufacturer, who meanwhile had become a contractor for the Wehrmacht. We also kept our house in Amsterdam.

My sons accompanied me on all my trips to Amsterdam and Diepenveen—and we always had our goat with us wherever we

went. If I wanted to have her milk year round, this precious animal had to be a mother herself every year. I still had connections with the Amsterdam Zoo, so I hoped that they could provide me with a male goat to service our milk goat But, unfortunately, they couldn't. In the autumn of 1944 fodder was scarce, and even the children's farms could not keep their animals.

After a long search 1 finally heard that someone in Weesp had a prime billy goat. I immediately made an appointment for the next day. I was to come there with my goat, and everything would be taken care of. But this was easier said than done. Our only means of transport was our car, and this actually belonged to the Bank of the Netherlands, My husband, who was always careful not to accept any special favours, did not want us to use this vehicle for private purposes. He had to set an example, and he wanted his wife to feel and act the same way.

The next day I told my husband that, as I had some errands to run, I would drive him to work. I promised to pick him up after work. He was very happy to have me go along with him. After I left him off at the bank, I sped back home. Blankets were put in the car, the goat was loaded in, and there we were, on our way to Weesp.

When we arrived, the billy goat was all ready for his "lady", and everything was over and done with in a few minutes. I thanked the farmer and quickly drove home, put the goat back in the bam, took the blankets out, and cleaned up the car as much as possible. Then I was on my way to the bank.

Cheerfully, I marched past the guard, who told me that my husband was already waiting for me. When I entered the office, my husband excitedly introduced me to two Germans from the *Ostministerium.* "Come," my husband said, "Well all have dinner at the Amstel hotel. If we're quick, I won't miss my other appointments this evening." We got into the car, my husband behind the wheel, with me beside him and the Germans in the back seat. I had already forgot all about the goat.

But during the conversation on our trip to the hotel, one of the Germans suddenly exclaimed: "What is this...? It must be a goat's hair. I can see and smell it...!" My heart almost stopped. My husband looked at me with a puzzled expression, as if to say, "Surely this can't

be possible?" I couldn't hide it any longer. Slowly and a bit scared, I described the entire adventure... When I had finished my confession, everybody was laughing, even my husband. They could hardly contain themselves. After this, the matter wasn't mentioned anymore.

I remember another trip by car to Amsterdam. Our automobile had a wood-gas generator, so we always had to take plenty of wood with us.

At the bridge near Deventer there was a very strict checkpoint, where it was hard to smuggle. But when I thought about the hungry faces of our friends, I couldn't bring myself to come empty-handed. I told our guards to take some wood off and load two sacks of potatoes instead, with a strict order not to tell my husband anything about it Luckily, I was never caught.

My husband wrote in his diary:

March 1944. The war has been going on for four years now, and the end is still not in sight. Ebbe, our second war child, is growing up with his brother Grimbert in relative peace.

The Germans are enduring all the air assaults and are waiting for the Führer *to strike back. Florrie and I are happy. We believe in the* Führer*. We know what it is all about. The* Führer *is protecting our children from the bandits in London and Washington and from Bolshevism.*

Two days later we were in Berlin to attend a memorial service for two of our NOC leaders, killed by partisans at the Eastern Front. We had to hold the service in the basement of the Bristol Hotel. The rest of the building was completely destroyed by bombs.

When we returned to Holland, Nijmegen, Holland's oldest city, had been totally and senselessly destroyed by American aerial bombardment.

Dear Youth, never forget the men, mostly Germans, who have protected you from these murderous bandits. Become men and fighters for the greater Germanic community of nations.

Spring came, and the Soviet offensive against Hungary and Rumania broke lose. Since the start of their summer offensive in July 1943 until March 1944, the Germans have destroyed 300 divisions. This new offensive commenced with another 300 divisions. Soviet losses have already reached 20 million dead or

captured. If these new divisions are annihilated as well, their losses will reach 25 million.

In the Ukraine, SS Division Viking under Obergruppenführer *Gille has twice broken out of encirclement at Cherkassy and Kovel While tens of thousands of volunteers are forming a security shield for Europe, new life is thriving.*

We are facing major military decisions. The Soviets have broken through our defences at Kharkov and have now reached the Carpathian Mountains. The Americans and British are getting ready for an invasion. Everything stands poised for the decisive battle.

At work I am facing a difficult period. It is not only the Anglo-Saxons who are getting tired of the war. Feelings are running high. It will take a lot of self-restraint to reach the finish line in good shape without losing my co-workers.

August 15, 1944, the notorious Crazy Tuesday. Rumours were spread that the Germans were about to surrender Holland to the Allies. Our house now looked like an army barracks. My husband stood at the fence, doing nothing but sending people back to their homes, saying that as a soldier one has to hold his position to cover the rear guard. But many lost their nerve anyway.

A few days earlier I had been to Amsterdam with my friend Gerda Schaap and her baby. She was desperate to find food for her child. But suddenly she and her husband Han van Etten disappeared from our house. When we searched the house, we found a Russian revolver under the mattress. It had probably been placed there by someone who wanted my husband and myself killed.

A few hours later Rauter called, asking us if we knew where van Etten was, because he—a former *SS* officer—had betrayed us. I had to tell Rauter that the couple had disappeared with their baby, and that I didn't have any idea where they were.

After the war, Han van Etten wrote a book about the Resistance, and in this book he mentioned a statement my husband had made to only a very few people. He had declared: "If we lose the war, we will haye Goring to thank for that. If we win the war, we should thank Himmler and his *SS."*

In the winter of 1944/45 the situation in the cities worsened. During the first years of the war, our railway system functioned

normally, so that the food supply was actually better than during World War I, when Holland remained neutral. Until September 1943 there had been no contact between the railway workers and the Resistance. Nobody was interested in striking. But this changed after the Allies landed in the Normandy on June 6,1944. This brought the war closer to Holland. The next day, the director of the Dutch Railways got together with the leader of the Resistance, F.J. Six. They sent a telegram to the exile government in London. They declared that they would be willing to go on strike, if the exile government thought that this was necessary. At first there was no reaction. But then unexpectedly, *Radio Oranje* announced a general railway strike on September 17, 1944.

The success of the strike depended entirely on the railway workers themselves. The Dutch people were generally more concerned about the news of Allied landings at Eindhoven, Grave, Nijmegen and Arnhem. As long as the fighting went on around Arnhem, everyone simply waited. When this ended in German victory and the Allies failed to get across the major rivers, the whole situation took on an entirely different aspect.

For the large cities in the west of the country, a general railway strike meant: no coal, no gas, no electricity, no food or running water. An exceptionally long period of frost, which lasted from September 23, 1944, to January 31, 1945, made transportation by boat impossible. Starvation was the immediate result. When news of the terrible famine reached London, the exile government considered stopping the strike. But in October 1944 *Radio Oranje* announced that it had to continue. And this, even though the strike no longer served its strategic purpose.

Meanwhile, British bombers terrorised the civilian population. When the trains were still running, they were shot at from the air. On September 5, 1944, a train came under fire at Apeldoorn, in which 23 people were killed. The next day 40 people were killed at Diemen. To provide some cover, trenches were dug alongside the roads. Here one could find shelter in case of air attack.

In the cities the situation worsened. Food rations were lowered to the bare minimum. Hunger was a guest in every household. Potatoes were gone from the table altogether. One lived on flower bulbs and

sugar beets. Steamed sugar beets, raw grated sugar beets, homemade sugar beet syrup and flavoured sugar beets, baked tulip bulbs, tulip-bulb biscuits, and much more.

There was fear of losing one's water supply. Wells were dug, and filters were sold to make the river water drinkable. Carbide lamps were used, instead of electric light. Garbage cans were stolen and made into furnaces. There was no more coal for anyone to burn. Trees were chopped down. In Amsterdam, Vondel Park was closed off to keep its trees from being stolen. Beds were burned, along with window frames, doors, planks and poles. Floors and staircases were taken apart.

Driven by hunger, thousands of people went on long treks through ice and snow to the eastern provinces of Gelderland and Overijssel. On the way many died. Everywhere one could see people, exhausted by undernourishment, resting beside the road. Farmers asked for more and more valuable goods for their beans, peas, wheat, milk and butter. On the way home one had to be careful not to be caught by the police.

The black market flourished. One of our servants proudly declared that he earned about a thousand guilders a day this way. One pound of butter cost 150 guilders, a kilo of salt 12 guilders, and fifty pounds of potatoes 560 guilders. Funerals were with push cart or delivery bicycle—if one could be buried at all. In churches the dead were left lying on the floor for weeks, partly because there was no wood for coffins, but also because there was nobody to dig graves.

Just think: Our exile government in London caused all of this to happen. So many people dying of hunger—was this the "Love for the Dutch People" that they were always talking about?

Allied air attacks took a high toll:

- Almelo 38
- Amersfoort 66
- Amsterdam 157
- Apeldoorn 107
- Arnhem 252
- Assen 14

- Diemen 96
- Eindhoven 138
- Enschede 361
- Flushing 202
- Geleen 83
- The Hague 511
- Hengelo 311
- Leeuwarden 15
- Leiden 69
- Maastricht 180
- Middelburg 45
- Roermond 75
- Utrecht 50
- Velsen 67
- Venlo 441
- Venray 201
- Winterswijk 41
- Zutphen 81 dead

And this is only a fraction of the actual number of casualties.

5.6 A Private Consultation with Dr. Seyss-Inquart

At the end of December 1944 there was a secret meeting at Seyss-Inquart's house *Clingendael* in Wassenaar on the Dutch coast. Both Hitler and Himmler were present. Current events in Holland and plans for the future were brought to Hitler's attention.

Himmler repeatedly interrupted the conversation to talk about the "third eye" on the forehead, an esoteric subject that seemed to fascinate him at the time. In the presence of Hitler, my husband became so upset with Himmler—because of the importance of the

meeting—that he burst out in anger. One could hear him shouting. "This is all very well, but first the war has to be won, before we can chat about a 'third eye'!"

In the adjacent room, Mrs. Seyss-Inquart and I held our breath. Thinking that something might happen to my husband and fearing that he might even be killed on the spot, our guards kept their weapons at the ready. My husband continued:

"And concerning the NSB, if you want to cut a dog's tail off, then do it in one fell swoop, and not bit by bit. We have served your purpose, so now we can go."

What prompted the meeting was a desire by *SS Obergruppenführer* Hannes Rauter to express his disappointment with the NSB. He did not consider Anton Mussert a capable leader for Holland. After winning the war, Rauter wanted to establish relations with the Resistance.

This infuriated my husband. Back in 1941 the NSB was recognised by the German government as the only party in Holland. It was my husband himself who warned Hitler against this decision, saying that the NSB would be overrun with opportunists.

"This is really too much," he exclaimed. "You yourself ordered me to work with Mussert! So I'm not going to be a part of this!" He then left without saying goodbye and stormed into the room where I was waiting. He told me to come home with him right away. We took our very relieved guards and left.

Arriving home, we immediately packed our bags. My husband was worried that we might be arrested. For hours we sat on the edge of the bed, discussing this terrible situation. At first my husband was very depressed, but after a while he regained his composure.

"I know what I'll do," he said. "If I am arrested, I will tell Hitler personally—man to man—how many mistakes the Germans have made in the Netherlands. I'm not going to be pushed into the wrong comer again by intermediaries like *Reichsmarschall* Goring."

In the morning the doorbell rang. We thought they were coming to arrest us. I opened the door. But instead of what we feared, there was a basket with wonderful white flowers sent by Himmler. Attached to it was a card with these words:

Dear Mrs. Rost van Tonningen, In the name of Hitler, we thank your husband for his honest expressions.

Relieved and overjoyed, we went back to work—but not before unpacking our bags.

In this context I would like to again quote from the original transcript of the third interrogation of Hans Albin Rauter, Amhem prison, February 6,1947:

> **Rauter:** The *SS* held the view that the Resistance was more interesting than anything else. The Resistance was also of great personal interest. It was the driving force in the Netherlands, both racially and politically.
>
> Q: Your idea was that the Resistance should be collaborating with you after the war, right?
>
> R: Yes, no one would have counted on the NSB. I wasn't angry that they shot at me [At *Woeste Hoeve,* March 7, 1945]. I tried very hard to get in contact with them, and not simply for political purposes. I really wanted to get in touch with those who stood on the other side in this struggle. They were true Dutchmen, and it should have been possible to deal with them. I really think it would have been possible. I have a great deal of respect for them. We didn't want to trick them. On the contrary, I turned a lot of things around. I was concerned about working together with the Dutch people at a time when they were being ground between two stones.
>
> I am of the opinion that the *SS* would have developed into a strong factor. The direction the *SS* was taking was well known among the people and within the Resistance. I believed in an honest Greater Germanic solution. About fifty percent of the Dutch would have remained neutral, and one could have counted on them. We would have been able to come to terms with the Resistance, if the war had been won. But it still would have taken years to accomplish. As a soldier, and considering psychology, that was my opinion.
>
> A fighter doesn't think like a politician. I thought that, if the war were won, the Dutch would look at the situation in a more

positive way. The Dutchman is not like the French. He is cool, calm, and doesn't have his feelings hurt as easily as a Frenchman. He doesn't get very excited. He thinks things out clearly. A Nordic person will tell someone to his face what he thinks. He sees things for what they are.

So, of course, we were surprised by these Dutchmen. We were surprised by the Resistance, which was brought to the Netherlands from other countries, like England and Russia. Initially, the Dutch Resistance was weak. In Amsterdam they got their news from Russia. They built a whole network of information between Moscow and Amsterdam. The Communists had close contact with Moscow even before the war. They had their own Resistance groups, not just after the start of the war, but even before the war broke out As soon as war with Russia began, the Communists took off. They inspired the Resistance in Amsterdam. Before this they had kept quiet

The February strike didn't have anything to do with the communists. The WA clashed with the Jews, because some of the latter were behaving impudently, at least considering the political situation at the time. After consulting Seyss-Inquart, Himmler ordered 400-500 Jews sent to concentration camps. This caused a strike to break out. The Jews put a lot of money into it. In my view it was a Jewish affair. Only then did we realise how close the Jews were with the dockers and municipal workers in Amsterdam.

My husband was in a position of influence, and therefore many people asked for his help if they got into difficulty. An example was Charles Pahud de Montagnes, a cousin of mine, who had been Olympic horse-riding champion. His son tried to reach England, but was seized by the German navy; whereupon Pahud de Montagnes asked my husband to intervene, so his son would not be shot. The same thing happened with my cousin, Jan Fentener van Vlissingen, who was a leader of the Resistance and a Freemason. When arrested, Jan asked Rauter to contact me. Because of my husband's intervention, his life was spared. I have only named these two, because they are family members.

It was C.F. Overhoff, a broker on the Amsterdam exchange who at the end of the war, despite his aversion to the German occupation, begged my husband to take up his offer and escape to Brazil with the children and me. My husband appreciated the offer, but, of course, firmly refused. He knew that he could answer for his actions with a clear conscience, and he wanted to stay on in his position. He asked me whether I wanted to take the children and leave, but I, of course, also refused.

How were we to know that we would become victims of anarchy as soon as the war ended? Mr. Overhoff was very concerned, fearing that if we lost the war, my husband would be brutally murdered. He held a high position in the Resistance, and had already heard some talk of this. Mr. Overhoff was 100% against my husband's views, but he nevertheless considered him an honest opponent and respected him very much. Unfortunately, Overhoff was proven right when my husband was later murdered in bestial fashion.

Before describing the most tragic episodes of my life, I would like to mention another meeting at Seyss-Inquart's house *ClingendaeL* Being lovers of classical music, we were invited to listen to some pieces by our favourite conductor, Willem Mengelberg, who was a friend of the Seyss-Inquarts. We all felt that this meeting would be the last of our friendly gatherings, and that a tragic separation would follow. It was a farewell to one of the most interesting times of our lives, in which European culture still played a leading role.

After we had listened to a few of Mengelberg's own songs, he continued with Verdi's *Ave Maria,* by special request of Arthur Seyss-Inquart. In spite of the fact that most of the guests were not Catholic, we all requested that he sing this beautiful song once more, so deeply moved were we. Instinctively, we knew that this would be our last chance to listen to something as wonderful as this. We all felt that this would never be repeated. It was something divine. Then we parted and went home.

Willem Mengelberg was the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra's greatest conductor. He could rightfully be called one of the giants of music.

The relationship between Mengelberg and Arturo Toscanini has often been discussed. They had known and valued each other, fol-

lowing their meeting shortly before the war. Mengelberg travelled regularly to Italy in the spring, to conduct a few concerts with some of the most famous orchestras there. In 1919-1920 Mengelberg celebrated his 25-year jubilee. On May 1,1925, Mengelberg was asked to conduct four concerts. These concerts brought him fame and glory. He was especially successful with Beethoven's 5th symphony and the *Pastorale,* and he gained much attention from the press, as well as from his audiences.

After World War II the Dutch lost interest and understanding, let alone love, for classical music. The fact that this giant of music was forced to spend the rest of his life in Switzerland, after being thrown out of the Netherlands, says it all: He was *pro-Third Reich* This shows how, even in music, all those sham post-war democracies would not allow freedom of expression. But our inner voice cannot be destroyed.



Gravesite of my brother Willem (Wim) Heubel

Chapter Six

My World Falls Apart

6.1 The Death of My Brother Wim

On January 1, 1945, my husband and I listened to the deeply moving address of our *Führer.* He wished his nation strength, directing his speech in particular to the women and children, thanking them for their immense effort. Working hard during the day, at night running towards the shelters with their children, carrying babies and helping old people—while deadly phosphorous bombs sowed death and destruction everywhere. All able-bodied men were fighting at the front to defend the Germanic lands from the Bolshevik onslaught, having to leave their women and children to fend for themselves, in constant peril of their lives.

"If you still have one, then light a candle now. This light will strengthen you in your shelters. I thank you all for your devotion."

While we listened to his words, simple and moving, we could hear the roar of guns. My husband proudly called me his "female front soldier", since I was one of the few women who stayed this close to the front lines, with my husband and two small sons. Besides, I was expecting my third child.

It was 8 degrees below zero. Snow fell heavily upon the frozen land, with two months still separating us from spring.

The situation at the front was precarious. With all our strength we tried to halt the Allied advance. Spring would be decisive, we all felt. My child was due to be bom about that time, too. In the Nether-

lands more and more children were being bom. In Germany the birth rate was five times as high in 1944-45 as in 1943, showing that nation's will to live.

The famine in the west of the country was a cause of great concern. Our people bore this load bravely. But how would it all end...?

For my husband and I it was always wonderful when my brother Wim and we had a musical evening together. I played the piano, Wim the violin, and my husband sang with his wonderful baritone voice. We felt as though we had escaped all the trouble for a while and had opened all our senses to the music.

I can still hear my husband singing this wonderful song about Helgi, who trying to find her husband in the mountains, finally finds his grave under the starlit sky, and in the early morning light dies upon his grave. We always believed that the Light would win over Darkness, and my husband was convinced that victory could only be achieved through direct action at the front. He also said that being someone in such a leading position, he should set an example of front-line duty.

On March 16, 1945, my husband started his duty with the *SS Landstorm* at Amerongen, where Wim served as officer. As for myself, I was appointed special envoy by Reich Commissioner Seyss-Inquart to deliver weekly reports of the Bank of the Netherlands to my husband, who wrote me the following letter:

My Dear Florrie:

You know bow much I love you. You always remained the Sun in my life. Please give the children a kiss for me Grimbert and Ebbe, and little Herretje, who is still in your womb. Imagine yourself in my embrace, because, my dear little wife, we are one, even when we're far apart.

If you and the children survive the war, then in my mind I will have already seen them rising from the dead countless times. I know what awaits them if we lose...

In my thoughts I embrace you once again, and thank God for having made you cross my path in life. I also embrace my oldest son Grimbert, who never failed in his love for his absent-minded father. And I kiss the good and exuberant Ebbe, as well as the little one you cany within you.

I must go now. Duty calls.
With love from me, Your
Husband

At the end of March the fighting was so close, that I was forced to flee with my children to the north of the country.

But first I wanted to visit my husband one last time at the front. This was a perilous undertaking. In the early morning light, after a long search through deserted fields, I finally found him in a bombed-out farmhouse. There he was, with two other Dutch *SS* officers and almost out of ammunition.

I sat on my husband's lap. We hugged each other; our bodies melted into each other, my husband's hand resting on my womb, from which—in a few weeks time—our youngest son would be born.

These were our last moments together—our farewell. Never **was I to see him again. *Our Honour Is Loyalty!***

During one of the last battles of the Dutch *SS* in the Netherlands, my brother Wim fell, fighting against superior enemy forces. As *SS Obersturmführer,* he had given the order to occupy a seemingly empty house on a small island. There were, however, Polish soldiers inside, and he was struck and killed by their fire on April 28,1945.

This is what my husband wrote, somewhere out at the front, after my brother Wim died:

My Dearest Florelore,

I gave Wim a salute, as he would have liked. I greeted him as a proud soldier, an irreproachable person and faithful son and husband—steadfast and devoted follower of the Führer*. Over his grave I promised Wim that I would not grieve any more. That is something Wim and the other SS men would not have wanted.*

Above Wim's dear face there rests an Ir-rune, carved out of white birchwood. The woman bears the child. The Tree of Life, with three roots, grows out of the soil and stretches its branches towards God's wonderful Sun. The child works,

fights, loves and grows up from boy to man. Then it returns to the universe, where our forebears also live. This is what we believe. We all know that God only calls home such a dear person as Wim, in order for him to continue his tasks from there. Wim lives on in his child according to the holy laws of blood, which created the race of which Wim was definitely a valuable part.

If Queen Wilhelmina now proclaims on Radio Oranje that our SS soldiers must be treated decently, so that they can form the nucleus of an army against the Japanese later on, then that will have been a triumph of our idealism. But Wim and I would have continued to fight for the Führer, no matter what.

April 29, 1945

In Memoriam

It is untrue that you are gone away, For I
am always wakened by your smile; And
further, the world cannot touch me, And
further, things do not concern me. The
core has been taken from my being, And
further, things do not concern me. The
years shall stand by this deathbed As
strangers, who did not come for me.

So I wait; I guard the crystal
Minutes of that fought-out battle;
And when heavy days fall upon us
I hear my feet walking through time;
I hear my feet walking along the narrow,
Sleeping path, which leads me to your smile.

W.M. Frederiks

6.2 In Search of a Safe Haven

In out last moments together at the front, my husband and I forgot about time. It was already dawn when I left him. Despite all this, my trusty escort made sure that I got safely through the enemy fire.

Returning to our home in Diepenveen, my children and the guards were waiting with great concern. With the Poles closing in, they feared for my life.

Suddenly, I realised that I was the only one left. Everyone else had already tried to escape, and now it was almost too late to get out. At that moment of desperation the telephone rang.

"Florrie, this is Wiet Rambonnet. I'm calling to find out if you're still at home. It's no longer possible for you to escape through enemy lines. The only thing I can suggest is for you and the children to come to the bridge at midnight. I'll be there myself. Then I'll blow up the bridge, and we'll all die together. It's the best thing to do—better than falling into enemy hands. There are terrible reports about the Polish soldiers..."

After considering this offer for a few minutes, I replied: "My dear Wiet, thank you so much for your comradeship. You're the only one thinking about me and the children. But I still want to try to cross the *Waterlinie* [a large part of the Netherlands that was inundated as a barrier against the enemy] to reach the north of the country. If that fails, then at midnight I'll be at the bridge with you and the children."

I left, taking the official car of the Bank of the Netherlands, with its wood-gas generator. It was difficult keeping the vehicle on the road and avoiding a drop-off into the water on either side of the narrow road, even more so because I couldn't use the lights. If we were detected by enemy planes, they would dive to about two or three metres above the car and fire. It would have meant death for the children and me.

But we made it through the front lines and reached Haren in the northern province of Groningen. There, too, everyone had already left. Then I drove on to Nieuwolda, even farther to the northeast, but the situation was the same everywhere. I was given the keys to a farmhouse, but there was neither water nor any kind of light. My car was shot up, but luckily we all survived... I went on, to where I didn't really know. Where was I to give birth?

I fled westward again, and was one of the last to leave Groningen for Leeuwarden, in the province of Friesland. Almost all of the bridges had been blown up. After Leeuwarden I went to the *Afsuitdijk,* the great dam which closes off the IJsselmeer. My God, what a terrifying sight... I saw hundreds, if not thousands, of Dutch and Germans—most of them in rags—trying to cross.

In the port of Harlingen many red flags were displayed, and every refugee they could hit was shot in the back. Left and right the dead and mortally wounded lay in the streets, a sight never to be forgotten... I met some friends and comrades, but no-one knew what to do. It was hell on Earth. I gave my car—or I should say, the bank's car—to our friend Eddy, and told him that there was still some reserve petrol left in the tank.

When I saw a small German naval vessel, I practically threw my children into it and jumped on board myself. Before anybody knew it, we were heading for the island of Terschelling. We came under fire when we hit a sandbank. We all lost our balance. The ship's doctor, noticing my presence aboard the ship, was concerned that I might go into labour right way. This was the last thing we needed at the time. But everything worked out all right.

After a difficult journey we reached Terschelling. The doctor, still worried about my condition, said:

"I'm sorry, but I can't do anything more for you. All we can do is try to find a bicycle for you. But then you are on your own". I was very grateful to him. On my bicycle I went to find a place for my sons and for myself, where I could safely give birth.

At last I found a place to stay. I gave birth to my son Herre without any help or support from anyone. My other sons didn't even notice the birth of their brother. My son was born on April 28,1945.

To my horror, I later found out that my brother had died on exactly the same day...

Stirb und Werde — Die and rise again

The newborn had to be registered at the municipal office, because I wanted to make sure that I had a birth certificate for him. To encourage the registrar, I gave him a small bottle of B*ols* gin, which I had been saving for the occasion. As a result, however, the whole island learned that Mrs. Rost van Tonningen had given birth to a son there. Because there were no longer any newspapers at that time anymore, a crier proclaimed the news throughout the island. Since my husband was president of the Bank of the Netherlands, everybody recognised his signature on the banknotes. So everyone knew exactly who I was.

In a short while a large crowd had gathered in front of my room. I can recall the hundreds of little flags—red, white, blue and orange—orange everywhere. I was standing outside my room, scared to death. My children kept asking; "Can we have one of those little flags, too?" I asked the bystanders to please give them one. They got one.

At this same moment, the naval doctor came by in his car. He was looking for the last Germans left on the island, to give them assistance if necessary. He saw the crowd, then my children and me. He drove his car right into the crowd, took my children and me, threw us inside and said: "There is nothing else to do. What do you want to do, get killed on the street or come to the ship with me, where we'll all probably die together?"

In the back of my mind, I recalled that if Hitler were to die, the authorities would issue an order for everyone to gather in Germany. The *SS* would then be ordered to fight alongside the Anglo-Saxons against the Soviets. Thus my deepest desire was to go to Germany. Perhaps I would even find my husband there...

The doctor gave me a poison capsule, in case I should fall into the hands of the enemy.

When we reached the harbour, there was one small vessel moored somewhat apart from the rest of the German naval fleet.

Miraculously, I managed to reach this boat with my children. The captain weighed anchor and away we sailed—through the *minefields!*

The German fleet at Terschelling, meanwhile, was seized by the Allies. Was this mere coincidence for our little family? I have always maintained that coincidences do not exist The *Nornen* kept our life's threads securely in their hands, showing us the way forward.

Proud of their own strength They set out, Ostara's gallant host, For reconnoitred shores, for The first time in history Appearing as a folk— Their youth shining forth Towards the future. Ostara's faithful brother Keeps watch over her.

6.3 The War Is Lost

Many lies have been spread about World War II. A major one is the accusation that Hitler *wanted* this war. Quite the contrary: Just as before World War I, the Allied powers had encircled Germany. To provoke a war they played on the antagonism between the Poles and ethnic Germans living under Polish rule in territories that before World War I had been part of the German Reich, but which were annexed by Poland during post-war anarchy.

The Polish Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Count Szembek, wrote in his diary that the Polish governor of Upper Silesia planned to annihilate all Germans living in the territory. The British government was well aware of this, yet Poland was assured that it could count on Allied support in case of war with Germany. Count Potocki, the Polish ambassador in Washington, reported that it was the Communist Second and Third Internationals, the Jews and the weapons

industry which wanted nothing better than a war. Count Szembek wrote in his diary: "We are being treated like an African tribe. They want to wage war over our backs." He showed that with honest and open negotiations with Germany, war could have been averted.

It is easy to understand that the German people would come to the rescue of their kinsmen, who were being terrorised and even massacred by the Poles. It was not the Third Reich that caused the war, but the aggression of the United States, whose President Roosevelt declared, "The borders of the United States are on the Rhine."

From the outset the Allies had demanded the total capitulation of Germany. And not just of Germany, but of the whole of Europe, of which Germany was the cultural centre. German culture had to be destroyed.

On May 8, 1945, the Allies achieved their goal. Admiral Dönitz accepted the unconditional surrender of the German Wehrmacht The looting spree could begin, in Germany as well as in the other defeated countries. Everything was taken—patents, inventions, and even the inventors themselves.

Private property was not spared either, particularly that of German soldiers. Officers were stripped of their insignia. Medals and decorations were confiscated. Papers and documents, fountain pens and photos of family members were taken as well. All of this was against the Geneva Convention. But the Allies didn't care much about conventions, anyway.

When the members of the German government were taken prisoner in Flensburg, they first had to wait for an hour in the hallway of the building. Krosigk and other members of the government, along with General Jodl and the supreme command of the Wehrmacht, were held under heavy guard. From them we learn about the events which took place within the government building. The Allies arrived with tanks, infantry and military police, in a show of force totally out of proportion to the number of people to be taken captive. Shortly after the opening of the government session, British soldiers entered with handgrenades and machine guns at the ready. "Hands up and pants down!" they ordered. Press photographers were present to capture this disgraceful spectacle on film. Everything was done to rob the members of the German government of all human dignity.

One has only to compare this with the correct treatment of the French generals after their surrender at Compiègnes in 1940.

In his book *War Against Germany,* Major General O.E. Remer quotes the following declaration by Admiral Dönitz:

1. **The capitulation was concluded by my delegate on the basis of written authorisation, which I issued as head of state of the German Reich and supreme commander of the Wehrmacht, as demanded and accepted in this form by the Allied representatives. With this the Allies themselves ac knowledged me as head of state of the German Reich.**
2. **The German Reich did not cease to exist because of the capitulation of the Wehrmacht on May 9, 1945, nor did this terminate my office as head of state. The caretaker gov ernment which I installed also remained in place. The Al lied commissions co-operated with it until May 23.**
3. **The total occupation of German territory following the capitulation did not alter this legal status. It merely pre vented me and my government from discharging our du ties. Nor did my seizure and that of my government alter the legal status. It merely meant that our official activity had totally ceased.**
4. **With this interpretation of the legal effect of military occupation, I am in complete accord with universally ac cepted principles of international law.**

This declaration is not simply of historical value. There is no legal instrument or document which declares the cessation of the German Reich. Dönitz was forced to accept a military capitulation, but the German Reich never ceased to exist.

When General Major Remer visited Hitler for the last time, he found him marked by the years, but mentally fully alert and a tower of strength. Remer reminiscences:

> I *reflected at length on my last meeting with Hitler. I had the vision of our old King Frederick the Great of Prussia, riding across the battlefield, grief-stricken. When he hears a mortally wounded soldier crying in agony, "Die he exhorts:*

properly!"** To me the words of the* Führer *seemed alike:* ***"In a honour-able defeat lies the seed of resurgence."

As a soldier, this was for me an order and an obligation.

6.4 My Husband as Prisoner of War

After the surrender of the German forces in Holland on May 5, 1945, my husband was taken prisoner by the Canadians.

Many years later I received the following letter describing the event, for which I am still grateful:

Dear Mrs. Rost van Tonningen,

During the last three weeks of bis military service, your husband was quartered in our village. Since the commander was billeted in our vicarage, your husband visited him here quite often. This is where he spent his last hours of freedom. From here he was taken into captivity on Tuesday, May 8, 1945.

When he left, he asked me to send one last greeting to his wife and children. He was convinced that he would never see you and the children again. He said:

"Even as prisoners we are marching for the salvation of the world. Tell my wife that I shall endure everything without fear or complaint."

His thoughts were always with his wife and children. He asked me to wait a while before sending you this letter.

I was also asked to tell you that he took part in the funeral service for your brother Wim. Deeply impressed by his tragic death, I am herewith fulfilling his last wishes. The Lard will have mercy upon you and the children. We hope that you will come to say, "He remains my Sunshine, even when He goes under. "All human words of sympathy fail here...

With deep sorrow,

The Rev. D. Vlasboom

P.S,: My wife wanted to add some final sentences:

Dear Mrs. East van Tonningen,

I would like to add a few lines myself. I can understand that you want to hear as much as possible about your husband's last words. He always assured us that his marriage was truly wonderful and harmonious. "I have a really wonderful wife", he told us over and over again. "Tell her I thought about her all the time during these days." He showed us a picture of you and the children. His tragic end hurt us deeply, and we can only imagine how deep your sorrow must be. There is only One who can natty help you. We are praying for Jesus Christ to stay close to you and give you peace. He has promised all of us: "Come unto me, all of you who are heavy laden, and I Will give you rest." May He comfort you as no man can possibly do. We are praying for this hope and peace from the bottom of our hearts.

Mrs. Vlasboom

Overlangbroek, June 13, 1945

And our old comrade, Nico Roskam, wrote the following letter:

Dear Florrie,

In reply to your question about when I saw your husband for the last time, I would like to say the following:

When we were detained together at Elst, we didn't need to do much to make us feel at home. This camp consisted of a few acres of land roped off with a ribbon. Within this area we were allowed to enjoy ourselves. Outside there were Canadian soldiers who had to guard us. They were nice lads. They wanted to talk to us, but they didn't have any idea or understanding about the whole situation.

As I said, there wasn't much for us to do. A few pieces of tent cloth joined together, and with a curse and a sigh our "house" was ready. Because there was nothing else to do, we just lounged about, talking with the other prisoners and looking to see if there was anyone we recognised. One of the first persons I encountered was your husband, whom I hadn't seen for about a year. After asking where he came from and the usual questions about family and children, he suddenly became very serious and said:

"Am I happy to see you so timely! I have an idea I want to discuss with some people. Meet me here tomorrow at three o'clock. I and some of my comrades will be here then."

The following day we got together with about ten other men, some of whom I already knew. They were younger than I was, so I think some of them must still be alive. In short, Rost van Tonningen wanted to ask the government to put together a contingent of volunteers and let them serve in the Dutch East Indies, to straighten out the situation there once and for all Since it was understood that your husband knew a lot more about the outside world than we did, we were all excited and accepted his idea.

Your husband had our confidence. He would try to contact the appropriate authorities about his proposal How much, if any, chance there was for the plan to be considered by our government, we could not judge at the time, but we felt like castaways who had just fired their last shots. A few days later your husband told us that the first contacts had been made.

We didn't stay long at the Elst prison camp, but were transferred to Harskamp. Transport by foot, ghee-upl...

In Harskamp I once again set out to find some familiar faces. I think I heard Rambonnet saying that they had taken your husband and brought him to another place. We never heard anything about the volunteers for the Dutch East Indies again. But when we prisoners got notice in 1946 that we were being transferred to New Guinea, I once again remembered your husband's idea...

•At the time I was in the Westerbork camp and immediately volunteered. I went before a commission but wasn't considered, probably because I was judged too old. I think it's possible that their ideas originated with your husband, who got the ball rolling in the first place.

But when I look at it now, I think the plan came too early, because we hadn't yet been convicted. The government started taking the prisoners to court in 1946. The first to appear had to pay the piper they were sentenced to between six and ten years in prison, with many receiving the death penalty. These sentences didn't have anything to do with the facts, but were often nothing more than acts of revenge, sometimes covered up with false accusations of theft or worse.

When everyone finally calmed down and nobody knew what to do with these "criminals", they probably remembered your husband's plan: Gather volunteers for the cleanup in New Guinea. Give them promises, offer them a two-year contract, and send this scum of the nation this is what the commander of Westerbork prison camp used to call us back to society.

Many prisoners with sentences of six years or more volunteered. A total of two groups were sent out. In 1946 the first transport of about 130 men left for Biak, New Guinea. The second, with about 170 men, was sent to Hollandia in

1947. A friend of mine, who had received a ten-year sentence, was sent home again after only twenty months.

Two things must be mentioned above everything else:

A. Sacrificial victims had to fall. This they owed the rabble on the street, after all their exaggerations on the radio. Mussert alone wasn't enough, more heads had to roll.

B. When thousands of us tried to collect our thoughts once again, your husband, with his brilliant mind and quick wit, tried to make the best of the situation. Were they afraid of this, or did he know too much and have to be done away with without getting the chance to say anything?

I am happy about the memories I have of your husband. Till the very end I saw him as a man who always tried to stay on top of every situation. This is my honest opinion, more than thirty years after all of this happened. May this letter help make it possible to see these events differently, that is, as history. History often repeats itself. One should never ask who's to blame, since it is true that a little shove to the left or right at a particular time can determine the final course of events.

Hanging on my office wall there is a little saying: "Victory has many fathers, but defeat remains an orphan." This letter is meant as a little salve for old wounds.

With cordial greetings and a firm handshake, also from Aenne,

Nico.

Our Honour is Loyalty

A short letter from a friend...

Dear Flore,

Last Monday we cut our rye, and yesterday we got it into the barn to dry. The harvestisn't it a miracle? A miracle to see how it germinates and blossoms. Then, later, to see how the grains fill in and how the ears get fuller and fuller. Then we watch the change of colour to golden yellow. Finally, the harvest comes as a gift to us. Isn't it the same with our ideals? Are our sacrifices not like the grain harvest? No matter how many others may be alive, the world cannot exist without people with an ideal..

6.5 The Murder of M.M. Rost van Tonningen

At the Elst prison camp my husband—who spoke many foreign languages—was employed as an interpreter by the German general, Kohlrose, during his negotiations with the Allies, which were conducted in English. He had a chance to draw up a report about the possibility of recruiting detained NSB members for employment in Dutch New Guinea.

While in Canadian captivity he also wrote a political testament in English about his life, work and goals. It was completed on May 24, 1945, and signed by him and two Canadian witnesses. Each typewritten page was sealed with his own blood, so as to prevent any falsification of the 14-page testimony.

When Prince Bernhard came to visit the camp in Elst, he once again stood face to face with my husband. The Prince quickly realised that Rost van Tonningen was a danger, because he knew too much. He had to be removed.

Shortly after finishing his political testament, my husband was transferred to the Scheveningen prison. There he fell into the hands of the local underworld. When he arrived at the prison, he was thrown out of the vehicle. His legs were tied to a pole, so he couldn't bend them, and he fell flat to the ground, much to the amusement of the fellows charged with transporting him. The criminals who were appointed prison guards immediately started beating him with sticks. The warder told my husband that he would not leave the prison alive.

He was given shoes that were much too small, forcing him to walk with tiny steps and causing him to trip. Having to wear these shoes was torture in itself, making it impossible for him to run with buckets of urine and excrement, as he was ordered. With him being the president of the Bank of the Netherlands, it was considered particularly gratifying to humiliate him as much as possible. He was continually beaten with truncheons. As a "joke" they tied a string

around his penis, yanking him across the floor if he wasn't quick enough to their liking. Sometimes they even pulled him up by this string.

The main gangsters in this prison of torture and humiliation were Messrs. pijl, Poot, Damhof, van Rijn, Pronk and Dr. de Reus.

Nights were the worst The guards would hire prostitutes and stage wild orgies, in which my husband was made the object of amusement. They would make a horrible din, one playing the piano, another sitting on top of it, stamping his foot to the music. The other drunks would then bellow out the "beautiful" song *Ouwe Taaie.* My naked husband would then have to salute and sing the national anthem. If he hesitated, they would pull the string.

Every day they would draw large Swastikas on the floor, which were then spit upon by the guards. My husband was then forced to lick the floor dean. He was ordered to hold heavy bricks above his head until he fell to the ground, exhausted and often unconscious. Then buckets of ice-cold water were poured over him to make him come around again.

My poor husband had to endure this sort of torture for eleven days and even worse nights, having to undergo all the torments that these underworld types and their whores could think of. In this realm, the human mind seemed inexhaustible. The names of all those responsible are retained in our archives.

The screams coming from the prison caught the attention of the police, who then decided to get some of the prisoners out, my husband in particular. The plan seems to have been leaked to the prison guards—which might explain why the security net below the staircase was suddenly removed.

In the early morning hours of June 6,1945, my husband was once again taken out of his cell. One of the guards attacked him and smashed his head in with a rifle butt. Then he was thrown over the balustrade.

The librarian of the prison, W. van der Kolk, felt compelled to sweep up the remains of my husband's shattered head. He was so unnerved by the atrocity, that shortly afterwards he became seriously ill. It took two years in a mental institution for him to recover.

Wim Kreischer, one of my husband's cousins, wanted to make a *bicycle* trip to Haarlem. But an inner voice told him to turn around and go to Scheveningen instead. He thought he heard Meinoud's voice calling him. Even though he wasn't interested in politics at all, he was proud of his cousin Meinoud, and decided to bring him some flowers. He went to the prison and asked to see Meinoud. Everyone thought that he was crazy. Who would ever be interested in what happened to the prisoners? Nevertheless, the door was opened for him, and he was taken to a shed. To his horror, he found the barely recognisable remains of my husband lying on a pile of garbage. The sight shocked him. Deeply shaken, he laid his flowers beside the body. The image never left him.

A few years later, when I had just been released from prison and had gone to live in The Hague, Wim visited me and told me everything. Then he wrote down everything he had witnessed. Shortly after that he died.

6.7 Political Reversal and the Ensuing Chaos

World War II ended for the Netherlands with the Allied conquest, which brought entirely different groups to power.

The Resistance had been strongly supported by the Dutch exile government. For example, in January 1944 it was given a total of 30 million guilders. All of this was in flagrant contradiction to the position of the government before the war. At that time they ordered everyone to co-operate with the occupation authorities in the event of war.

But since the old democracy turned out to be a threat to those in power, a democracy not for the people, but *against* the people, had to be formed. To frighten the people into submission, an example had to be set. This could best be achieved by relentless persecution of so-called collaborators and members of the National Socialist parties, in

what British Prime Minister Anthony Eden would call "the greatest manhunt in history".

For this purpose the so-called **Special Court of Law** *(Bijzondere Rechtspleging)* was set up. In Holland, between 150,000 and 250,000 people were taken to concentration camps *after the* war: men, women and children—even babies. There was a severe shortage of food in these camps. The houses left by NSB members were looted. If one had prosecuted those who committed these thefts, fully half of the Dutch nation would have been imprisoned!

The government therefore decided to seize these houses itself, selling the furniture, clothing and other valuables. Sometimes an entire household—including antiques—was sold for a mere ten guilders. NSB members were compensated up to a maximum of 4,000 guilders—a fraction of their actual loss.

Dr. H.W. van der Vaart Smit published a book about the terrible things which occurred in the concentration camps for political prisoners *after* the war, as did Koos Groen, a well-known member of the Resistance. Together with Mrs. van Schilfgaards, Dr. A.M. Baron van Tuyll van Serooskerken wrote a report on all of this. It was presented to the president of the Commission of Enquiry on October 5, 1950. Dr. van Tuyll van Serooskerken writes:

While investigating instances of abuse in the internment camps, it quickly became evident that most of the guards did not shy away from torturing or beating completely helpless human beings, employing the same methods used earlier by the Germans. [The usual anti-German bit must be added, of course.] *Such maltreatment of prisoners often happened with the permission of the camp commanders.*

The more serious cases of violence occurred immediately after the liberation. At the ***Vergulde Hand*** *camp prisoners were tied down with heavy ship chains and shackled about the ankles. At* ***Harskamp*** *the Canadian guards were replaced in July by Dutch guards, who behaved atrociously. At night they would often shoot at the barracks, and many prisoners were killed in their sleep. On average, such shootings took place about three times a week. These incidents continued until the spring of 1946.*

Severe and inhuman maltreatment of prisoners took place at the Scheveningen prison, where the director and guards were Dutchmen in Canadian service.

On July 22, 1945, control of the prison was turned over to the military authorities, and such abuses were immediately ended.

*At **Harskamp** it was customary to give the names of the people who had died at evening roll call One day the prisoners were told that Mussert had died. Everybody stood to attention for two minutes. The whole barrack—about 300 men—was promptly punished: four weeks on bread and water, four hours of strenuous exercise each day, and four hours a day without being allowed to talk.*

Occasionally prisoners were tied to radiators. One man was to be shot just for the fun of it. He was put in front of a tank with a machine gun on top. But the soldier who was to shoot him couldn't get the lock off the gun, and so the man survived. At the outset food and medical attention at the camp were extremely scarce. One prisoner testified:

*"At Westerbork the camp criminal investigator, Wieringa, was a known as cruel man. Because of treatment at this camp, my left lung is damaged. From **Harskamp** I was taken to the Blaskowitz bunker with about fifteen others. We were put in a cell two by three metres across. We had to sit on our knees facing the wall, with our hands held in the air. I got up once, but was knocked down with a gun by one of the guards.*

I saw Dr. Neuthorn and Dr. Groteput in a coal shed too small to stand up in. Remarks like, What, is this an SS man? Then under the ground with him!' were very common. During the winter of 1945-46 many prisoners had to live in holes in the ground, somewhat covered by a few boards.

Once I overheard the following conversation between two guards: 'Someone got shot. The guy was standing at the window. He must be dead, but so what? It was only an SS man. I've already shot about eighteen myself.' Then the other guard said, Well, I've just made some of those bastards over there bathe in their own blood. If they don't turn the light off soon, I'll shoot the whole bunch!' He then gave advice to aim low, 'Because those sons of bitches are dug in.'"

Countless stories like that could be told. H.J. Nijks gave the following report about his experiences:

.1 was taken prisoner by the Home Guard in the province of Groningen and brought to an empty schoolhouse. Shortly afterwards other prisoners arrived. The

Germans had been in this building previously and had left hand grenades under the straw. During the day we had to work on farms. When we had to relieve ourselves, an armed guard would accompany us.

Soon afterwards we were transferred to Winschoten. There they packed twenty of us into a cell so small, that each man had only about twenty centimetres of floor space. In one corner then was a toilet. Every time the door opened, we were afraid that we would be taken to one of those painful interrogations.

During the day we had to work on the land or perform odd jobs for various people. There was too much food to die, but not enough of it to live. In order to stay alive some of the prisoners ate grass.

On May 7, 1945,1 was transferred to another cell, where I was interrogated by police officer Jurgens. He started asking me all kinds of questions. When I couldn't answer some of them, he tried to beat me with his truncheon. I jumped up, and he didn't get me right away. Then he got three others to hold me down and beat me unconscious. When I recovered, I was taken behind the building with three other SS men. There we had to dig our own graves. While a water hose was turned on us, we were hosed with cold water, while others were firing in our direction with machine guns.

In the prison yard there were ditches through which we had to crawl This exercise was known as the 'Winschoten Water Ballet". In winter we had to sort out peas in the barracks. Once an inmate put a pea in his mouth. He was ordered to go out and run through a deep ditch filled with water. A police dog chased after him and bit him severely. When he got back to the barracks, he was bleeding profusely and his clothes were torn to shreds. He was taken to the ***Westerbork*** *camp, where he died the next day as a result of this "exercise". This kind of sadism could be found in all of the camps.*

I myself remember one incident in the women's prison camp where I was later detained. We had to stand in line—hundreds of us—while the guards kept shooting up and down for fun. Three of the women were told to come forward. They were ordered to slowly drown some stray cats they had become attached to. The rest of us had to stand by motionlessly, if we didn't want to get shot.

In the ***Rhijnauwen*** camp, Lemmers was shot by one of the guards for no apparent reason. In the newspapers it was reported that he had tried to escape.

In the ***Sellingerbeese*** camp a woman and her baby were shot for fun. In ***Ellewoutsdijk*** C.A. de Kreuk was shot while working, again without reason. In ***Wezep*** the commissioner for the province of Overijssel was shot in the leg. His leg was then amputated—but bullets were left in his thigh, to make sure he would never be able to wear an artificial leg! Another comrade wrote the following account:

My father was transferred to the ***C.C. Polder*** *camp. The prisoners arrived on foot and had all been mistreated. Two policemen came by bicycle to pick up one of the prisoners. They made him run in front of the bike. Again and again he fell down, and the policemen would just run him over. Finally, he couldn't move anymore, and they had to drag him to a nearby farm.*

H. from Scheemda was held at the same prison camp. He tried to escape. The guards caught him and shot him in the side. After he was released from the hospital, he was tied to a grenade with an iron chain, so he wouldn't be able to try another escape.

I could write an entire book about the cruelties in the camps. The women's hair was cut off. A Swastika was then burned into their heads. There were many mothers with babies among us. The babies were put outside a large circle drawn with chalk. The mothers had to stand inside the circle. Before the women were allowed to breast-feed their children, they had first to "please" their guards. Most women were raped before feeding their children. If they refused or fought back, they were not allowed to feed their children—so they would starve. Sadism, sadism, sadism...

Some Opinions about the Special Court of Law:

- ***Dr. Pollema, speaking in the Dutch senate:***

  In plain language: The Special Court of Law established under the guidelines of the returned exile government in violation of the Constitution, which cannot be justified in any way by reference to a national emergency.

- ***His Holiness, Pope Pius XII, at the opening of the Holy Year 1951:***

Then must come an end to the Special Court of Law, which has brought so much pain and suffering to families and individuals, many of whom have been wrongly accused. Having to endure such punishments after so many years creates bitterness towards a society which allows such things to happen. And at the end of 1951:

How painful is the life of those who, through unrighteous laws or political fanaticism, are being held in prison in many countries.

- ***From De Londense Koninklijke Besluiten (The London Royal Edicts), Prof. Dr. G.M.G.H. Russell, 1948:***

The Dutch exile government in London thought it necessary to issue a large number of decrees in the spring of 1944, which made the Dutch a people without rights and laws. Retroactive punishment, and so-called re-education in camps of people who, at the time, did not act contrary to the existing laws, was not only a violation of constitutional rights, but it was also an act of narrow-mindedness by people influenced by prejudice based on fear rather than by the facts.

- ***The Nederlands Juristen Blad (Dutch Lawyers' Magazine), 1947:***

In London and the occupied parts of the Netherlands the National Socialists were looked upon as a group of antisocial and profiteering traitors and criminals, whose main goal was to satisfy their lust for power and wealth with the aid of the invaders. The London Decrees—which in real life were quite impractical—were an expression of this. The way the prisoners were treated in the camps was the result.

- ***De Linie newspaper, May 13, 1949:***

It is our duty to point out the injustice done by purging and punishing a lot of people according to a point of view contrary—with a few exceptions—of June 1944—to the laws as they existed at the time of the occupation.

- ***Nieuwsblad ran het Noorden, June 1,1946:***

We have inherited a difficult situation. In our midst we now have a growing number of people who feel left out of the community. Perhaps, when they have served their time, they will ask us sarcastically: "What did we tell you about Russia? About America? And about Europe?"

- ***Leeuwarder Courant, November 28, 1947:***

It has to be roundly admitted: The political prisoners' elemental human rights were violated. Pages have been written in the book of history that our posterity will not read with pride. The illusion of a clean judicial practice is no longer accepted by anyone.

- ***DeLinie, February 27, 1948:***

Our conclusion must be that the Supreme Court has failed to justify the Special Court of Law on legal grounds. The Special Court of Law, in turn, has failed to remove the blemish of its origin with objective success.

- ***De Telegraaf, June 24, 1950:***

The Special Court of Law has brought a flood of injustice upon the Dutch nation, leaving behind a path of destruction. And the same paper on September 26,1949:

Stories are being told about the Special Court of Law, which by their mere existence point to a flaw in judicial policy. It is a public secret that the old judiciary leaned upon many individuals who came forward after the war. Efforts to unmask these individuals have thus far failed. No one has managed to disentangle the judicial process and the obligations entered into during the war. It is our impression that an iron broom is needed to clean up the country. In the Netherlands a number of cases are pending, which have made an Augean stable out of a healthy practice of law.

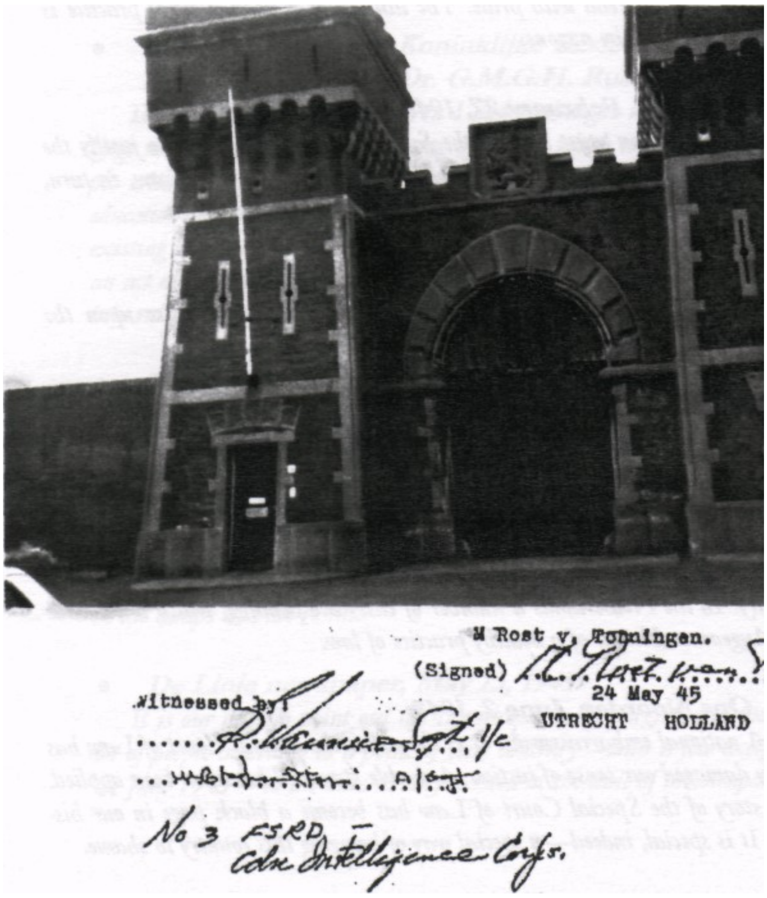
- ***Ons Noorden, June 2, 1948:***

A national embarrassment. It is clear that the Special Court of Law has badly damaged our sense of justice. A double standard has often been applied. The story of the Special Court of Law has become a black page-in our history. It is special, ind~~eed~~ special way of bringing this country to shame.

- ***De Linie, April 8,1949:***

The minister of justice in the London exile government, Dr. van Heuven Goedhart, bears grave responsibility for this disastrous revenge legislation, which has brought about an orgy of power lust and human devastation.

Sans justice il n'y a. que des oppresseurs et des victimes.
Napoleon Bonaparte
(Without justice there are only oppressors and victims.)



Her Majesty's prison in Scheveningen

Chapter Seven

My Life as a Widow

7.1 A Long March

After setting sail for Germany, our little ship finally reached the harbour of Cuxhaven. We experienced a voyage that I shall never forget—navigating through minefields, threatened by warplanes, alternating between hope and despair.

I was given a cabin to stay in with my children. It was quite small and cramped. Ebbe and Grimbert got sick right away, and Herre looked so ill, that I feared for his life. I tried to breastfeed him, but it didn't make much of a difference, because I didn't have any milk.

Together with the captain, we studied the map to find the safest route. What a dreadful night it was! Through all the stress and worry, I repeatedly lost consciousness. I was comforted somewhat by the thought of being in German territory. Maybe I would find my husband there. Who knows what was still in store? But fate was kind to us, and despite all dangers, we reached Cuxhaven unharmed.

The city was under British occupation. Our ship was immediately seized, and we were not allowed to disembark. The captain was very concerned about the children and me, and tried to contact a hospital for us. He succeeded, and a few hours later a Dr. Dulle arrived in a Red Cross van. I showed him the paper given to me by the ship's doctor, and this saved our lives. Dr. Dulle said that he would help us. It was just in time—Herre was close to death, and so was I. After the doctor had examined us, we went to the hospital, where we were given a room for ourselves. Herre was immediately taken to the infants' unit. A wonderful nurse by the name of Cecilia took care of

him. We were all gravely ill, but our lucky star was with us, and we recovered.

In the infant's unit my baby was the only healthy one. All of the thirty other babies had been infected from birth with venereal disease. It was a terrible sight.

That I and my three children were still alive was nothing less than a miracle. I always remembered my husband's last words to the children on Thursday March 15,1945:

"Grimbert, my oldest boy, I know you'll be nice to your mother, now that your father is leaving for the front Be brave, my little one. Goodbye, my dear Ebbe. Father has to go away. He hopes to see you again soon, when you have got bigger. Herre, my son-to-be-born, you'll be your mother's happiness! Father loves all of you."

Isn't life a riddle? Where were all of the people who had crossed my life's path? Was my husband really dead? My brother Wim, my parents, my mother-in-law—were they still alive? I didn't know the answer. What was I to do?

I didn't have to think about it for long, however. At night nurse Cecilia came to me and said that word had got out as to who I was. I was to be taken to England the next day. Quickly we tied bed sheets together. The children were let out of the window. I followed, and soon we were in the street. I arranged with Cecilia that she should stand in the middle of the street and force to a halt the first truck that came along. We would then climb in the back without being seen.

A big American truck drove up. To avoid running over Cecilia, the driver screeched to a halt. Quickly, the children and I scrambled into the back of the truck. After a few curses at Cecilia, the driver continued on his way. Through a narrow opening I was able to see our dear friend and wave goodbye to her.

About thirty kilometres farther on the truck arrived at a checkpoint, and we were discovered. But everyone was so busy, that I just walked away and continued on my journey. But where to go, and how? I felt like an animal being chased, without a home, without a country, without money or family. The only thing I had was an official paper from the hospital:

Mrs. Rost van Tonningen and her children from Deventer, Holland, wen admitted to our hospital in Cuxhaven. Mrs. Rost van Tonningen had childbed fever, the newborn suffered from an infection of the digestive system and weight loss, and the two older children had bronchitis and fever. Mother and children are well enough to be released from the hospital. Re/ease is necessary because the hospital beds are needed for new patients.

Dr. Schilling,
Physician in Charge
Cuxhaven

There we were, walking along a road, a woman pushing a little cart with a baby in it and two children on either side, holding on to her coat. What was the difference now between a president's wife and an ordinary vagabond? We felt deserted by God and the world—there was no train or bus, not even a road sign anywhere. Germany had lost the war. Oh poor, destroyed, lonely land—defeated, bombed out, shattered...

Suddenly an MP vehicle, with two of those dreadful guys with red berets, pulled up alongside me. Menacingly they looked us over, then declared in a harsh tone of voice that being on the road was forbidden, let alone wandering around. They asked why I didn't know about this. It was against regulations of the British occupation force. I knew nothing about this. From one of my pockets I pulled out a crumpled piece of paper, which I had received at the hospital. On it there was a stolen English seal. It was my only chance. I knew that I took a great risk of being found out. But the result was amazing. Suddenly one of them asked me in a friendly way:

"Where are you going? Do you speak English?"

I quickly told them that I did, and much to my surprise, we were allowed to climb aboard the vehicle. I was asked to help them as an interpreter.

After a long and bumpy ride we reached Hildesheim. There I had to get out right away, because suddenly the soldiers found themselves in a great hurry. Standing lost in the street, a little boy came up to me and asked: "Who are you? Where are you going?" I told him that I didn't have anywhere to go. "Oh," he said, "Come with me. My mother has a room." And so I followed this sweet little boy.

All of Hildesheim had been bombed. Every single house was either damaged or destroyed. We entered a room, where the boy's mother was sitting at a table with eight small children. Two chairs and a bed were the only other possessions she had. The little boy excitedly told his mother about us. A few more people wouldn't make any difference, she said, and we could stay for the night. I looked so ill, that she insisted I lay on the bed to rest. It was truly wonderful. The next day we were on our way again to Goslar. Luckily, we were able to catch a ride aboard a truck.

Goslar had not been invaded by the Soviets. Would I find my parents and mother-in-law still alive? I felt dizzy as I rang the doorbell at the house of one of my aunts. And guess who opened the door? My brother-in-law Wim! We hugged each other. My mother-in-law was there, as well. Oh, what a joyous event it was!

Suddenly Wim became very serious and said:

"Your father is on his deathbed. Maybe you can get there in time to tell him that you and the boys are alive and well."

I raced with my children to the refugee home in the Frankenberg Convent, where my mother and father had been given a room. Leaving the boys outside, I rushed into the room. My mother was sitting at my father's bedside. He was still alive. Slowly, he opened his eyes and looked at me with a long, silent gaze.

"Are you still alive?" he asked. "And the children?"

Quickly I let him see the boys. Then a miracle happened. My father's will to live grew so strong that he recovered. We were all together again!

But what had happened to my brother Wim and my husband? It was rumoured that they had both died. What strength one needed not to lose faith during those difficult times, faith in an ideal and—most importantly—faith in people! One day it all became clear to me."My God," I thought, "I'm alone. What am I to do now? Fate has decided that I should live. If only I could have died, like my brother and my husband."

But obviously my path in life had not reached its end. I still had an important job to do. Life still had something in store for me.

He in whose breast the "Once upon a time" of his race does not exist will never have a future that belongs to him.

Let us listen to the voice of our ancestors, and let us protect from strange hands that which seeks to spring from our own soul.

Stronger than all hosts is the man who can shield himself with his inviolate being.

Wulf Sörensen, ***The Voice of our Ancestors***

7.2 A World Turned Upside Down

With my arrival in Goslar with my three little sons, a period of great happiness began for me, a period in which I could again catch my breath. At the same time, it was also one of indescribable pain. How close are life and death to one another.

Was I a widow or not? I was kept in the dark for many years. Someone told me that my husband had jumped out of a third-floor window. Someone else said that they had taken his corpse to such and such place. Suicide yes, suicide no, murder yes, murder no... Still another person told me that he knew for sure that my husband had escaped to Argentina, and I would receive word from him there.

I myself was interrogated concerning the whereabouts of my husband by the British military. They told me that he was needed for the reorganisation of the Bank of the Netherlands. My husband's name was still popular there, they said, because of his expertise.

It was a comfort to be reunited with my parents in Goslar. What would have happened to me otherwise? My three sons had their beloved grandparents. It was a place of security for them. Only now did I realise what dangers my children and I had gone through.

And our beloved Goslar was still standing. It hadn't been bombed like almost all of Germany's other towns and villages, with death and destruction everywhere...

Just think of Dresden! This city was bombed by the American air force during the night of February 13-14,1945, killing some 480,000 people in 15 hours—most of them burnt alive in excruciating agony. Among them were:

- 37,000 small children and infants
- 46,000 children of school age
- 55,000 war-injured soldiers, doctors and nurses
- 12,000 members of rescue units
- 330,000 elderly men and women

In the words of the great poet Gerhard Hauptmann:

"Whoever forgot how to cry learned it again the night that Dresden was destroyed."

On a stone in the cemetery in Dresden is written:

How many died? Who
knows the number?
In your wounds
One sees the torment
Of the nameless
Incinerated here
In this hellfire
Of human hands.

I shall never forget the day I stood alongside a road with my children crying, as I witnessed hundreds—if not thousands—of former German soldiers marching into Goslar to be quartered in the hotels there. They were infested with lice, and many were suffering from oedema, covered with sores, with swollen legs and bruised bodies. Poor creatures, poor Germany!

In the midst of death and destruction Goslar stood out like a refuge, offering hope and a certain sense of safety. A few days after

my arrival I was picked up by a British-Dutch liaison officer. I was interrogated for 24 hours straight. At the end the officer said:

"I congratulate you and honour you. You were telling the truth, and so I'm going to let you go. But I advise you to leave as quickly as possible. I know the Russians want to get hold of you."

I thanked the good man and made sure that I was not easily discovered.

I gained strength and comfort from being with my youngest son. "Dear," I said, "Your father thought so much about you before you were even born. He called you our 'child of change', because your birth was supposed to herald a reversal of our fortunes." Sadly, this was not to be.

I painted a bit to get food for my parents and children. I picked blueberries and looked for mushrooms in the woods in order to survive.

My parents had lost everything within a single year—their home and offices, their complete fortune, as well as their oldest son Dolf, who died following an operation for a disease contracted during the terrible time that he was in Japanese captivity in the Dutch East Indies. Their second son Wim fell at the front on April 28, 1945. And then they lost my husband, who was like a son to them.

My mother-in-law lost her youngest son—my husband, who had been the apple of her eye. When she crossed the border into the Netherlands, she was arrested and taken to a concentration camp, even though she was 75 years of age. Her son Nico got her out after a short while, but she never really recovered from this last ordeal and died pitifully.

The years 1945, 1946 and 1947 were years of flight and imprisonment. I was arrested and taken to Holland. After being shifted from pillar to post, I was taken to the custodial camp at Schalkwijk. Each day I had to stand on top of a tower, watching my fellow prisoners as they marched by. Some had only one leg, some had been shot in the jaw, some had arms missing... It was a terrible sight.

Afterwards, the men were forced to stand on a table in front of me, and I had to tell their names. If I didn't know, they were beaten up. Then they were all pushed into a small room lined with barbed wire, which injured them horribly.

One day Number 1367—that was I—was called out over the loudspeakers. I walked slowly toward the exit, a small bundle of clothes under my arm and wooden shoes on my feet. There I saw two vehicles, one a prison car and the other an automobile bearing diplomatic tags. I automatically walked toward the prison vehicle, but was told to get into the other car instead. Inside were two police officers, Luyendijk and Karsten. They drove me to the Hotel *Jan Tabak* near Laren. They had brought a change of clothes for me, as well as some Dutch and German money.

When I came downstairs a sumptuous dinner awaited me. But because I weighed only 98 pounds and had been given hardly anything to eat for so long, I was unable to enjoy much of it. To my surprise, the two men told me that they had been following my husband and me for a long time. They knew many amazing things about us—like the time I was playing around with my husband at an antique shop, pulling his hat over his face!

Several hours later I was brought to Enschede, where I had to sit at a table with a lot of officers, and was told to play the role of a general's wife. Then I was tapped on the shoulder and ordered to get into a Red Cross van, which was to take me to Germany. In Burgsteinfurt I was put on a train for Hildesheim. My two escorts waited until the train started moving, and they were sure that I was on my way.

When I arrived in Goslar again, I got a room at the Frankenberg Convent with my children, who had previously been sleeping in the room my parents had been given there. But again I was not to stay in Goslar for long. One night I was suddenly woken up by soldiers, who had climbed through the window. They put a pistol to my chest and told me to come with them right away. I had to leave my sons behind. Luckily, they did not wake up. I put a little note in a shoe for my parents, along with a small poison capsule. In the note I asked my parents to take good care of the children and save the capsule—which the doctor on Terschelling had given me—just in case.

I was placed in a Red Cross car, along with two *SS* men, who had been taken from the hospital just before their operation. One had his jaw missing, and the other had lost both legs. The vehicle was securely locked, and we were taken back to the Netherlands. The trip

took more than 36 hours, and we were half dead because of a lack of oxygen and the smell of untreated sores. Perhaps they hoped that we would die on the way, so they would then be rid of us.

Later on, I tried to escape to Germany with a friend. As we tried to circumvent the border checkpoint, she stumbled, and a bag of coffee beans, which she had hidden in her bra, fell out and spilled all over the ground. I had to continue running, despite my friend's misfortune. Eventually, I too was discovered, arrested and taken to a farm in the no-man's-land between Holland and Germany. The commander ordered us to write our names down. He was overjoyed to have captured a Rost van Tonningen and already saw himself getting a big promotion. In celebration he imbibed freely of some wine he had found in the cellar. He soon fell asleep, at which point I cautiously opened the door. Again we were free, and after surmounting some further difficulties, my friend and I finally managed to reach Goslar once more.

But my parents could not stay in Germany. There wasn't enough money, and I didn't earn very much with my paintings. With one last effort I was able to arrange for my mother to travel to the Netherlands with my youngest son. My two other sons, meanwhile, were able to travel with a Dutch refugee transport. As for myself, I had to try once again to get across the no-man's-land. All went well, and we were all reunited in Hilversum at my grandmother's home.

We were so immensely happy, that I threw all caution to the wind. It was a glorious evening. But it was also to be our last evening together. The next day the police were at the door. My mother was arrested and taken back across the border. She had to undress and undergo an examination of her private parts, because supposedly she might have hidden money there! Besides that, all of her jewellery was confiscated.

I was taken to Amsterdam, where I was held in police custody. The conditions in my cell were such that I thought I was going to die. There was hardly any air, no water and almost no food. The lights were kept on day and night, shining directly in my face. Every day two men claiming to be medics would enter my cell and proceed to "examine" me in such a way that I eventually lost consciousness. They considered it their daily "fun". A chaplain found me lying in a

pool of blood and took me to the prison hospital. Because of him I am still alive.

I received a small postcard from my sister, which read, "The rest there will do you good". Such ignorance made me so angry, that I vowed I would survive to show them all. With the help of a fine attorney I was released—this time for good.

Since I didn't have a family willing to take me in, I moved in as housekeeper with one of my husband's distant cousins. He was an alcoholic, making my stay there an absolute hell. But at least I had a roof over my head, and with some difficulty I managed to get my sons to live with me again.

My family was back together. How happy that makes a mother feel! Wasn't the world turned upside down, when those who loved their country were persecuted and thankful just to have a roof over their head? We had lost everything. We had been robbed. Democracy had become a caricature.

Instead of a democracy *for* the people, we now had a democracy *against* the people.

7.3 Living at Frankenslag 180, The Hague

My residence was now at Frankenslag 180, where this distant cousin had been living for years as a widower. He was in the habit of drinking a whole bottle of gin every afternoon. Then he would try to molest me. After a while I became so frightened, that I called upon a niece of my husband, who lived nearby, for help. After explaining the situation to her, she immediately agreed to help, bringing along my cousin Wim. Together, we thought, we should be able to clear this situation up once and for all.

As quietly as possible we sat in my room. Then we heard the sound of footsteps. The old man called in a soft voice. Then he discovered to his surprise that the door was unlocked. He stuck his head around the door and was about to call my name again, when

suddenly he was interrupted by the little terrier my cousin had taken with him. The dog barked madly and charged towards the door. The old man got such a scare, that he ran out as fast as his legs could carry him. After that the problem was solved, and he never tried anything with me again.

But a few days later a furniture truck pulled up and took away all the furniture from my quarters. If the old man thought that this would change my mind, he was wrong. Word got around, and my friends brought some straw for me to sleep, along with a couple of chairs. These were friends and comrades who, like myself, had lost everything and whose husbands were, for the most part, still in prison.

By chance an old NSB comrade called and said that he had found some of my old furniture. He had heard rumours that it was to be picked up in a few days by Mrs. Kruseman and a Mrs. Bollaan.

He said that he would send a car to take me to Amsterdam. There I found some nice things from our old house. Overjoyed, we packed the furniture into a small van and drove back to The Hague. My possessions now consisted of—among other things—a bed, a pedestal cupboard, a table and some chairs.

Exhausted from all of this, I rested on the bed. Suddenly, I heard a car pull up. And who should get out but—my sister, Mrs. Kruseman. She wanted all the furniture—*my* furniture—because she was going to give it to someone else! In the meantime I had already inspected the little pedestal cupboard and found a red braid, which I had cut off a long time ago. Angrily I told her:

"Whom does this hair belong to, you or me? This braid is mine. You should only wish you had such pretty red hair."

That was too much for my sister, and she left. She didn't bother me any more after that

None of us NSB widows had any money. We helped each other as much as we could. I tried to make money painting lampshades. I advertised on a pretty card, which I put in my window. This brought in some orders. I even made the headlines in the local paper: "From President's Wife to Portrait Painter."

Then they said that I was painting lampshades made out of parchment, just as Ilse Koch had made lampshades from human skin... and gone was my good reputation.

A friend of mine, Mr. Asjes, asked me to accompany him to Leiden, where he taught graphology. He offered me a free course of study. I eagerly seized this opportunity to complete three previous courses I had taken in that field.

After the war all one ever heard was, "Himmler was a demon", "Hitler was a devil", etc., etc. I didn't know what to believe anymore. Perhaps I could draw conclusions from their handwriting.

Graphology was an eye-opener for me. I learned that my husband's handwriting showed great intelligence. And then there was Hitler's signature, which was a revelation to me. Only Himmler's handwriting brought me into inner conflict.

On March 10, 1947, I received an urgent message: "Mother seriously ill. Please come." With great difficulty but through the help of my attorney I was able to go to Goslar, to be with my mother to the end. Life, the greatest of all treasures, had become too heavy for her to bear. The Almighty took pity on her. With tears in my eyes and filled with deepest respect, I parted from her on March 17,1949. Her life was an example for all of us.

My father and I were left behind, which brought us closer together than ever before.

7.4 My Investigations Into the Murder of My Husband

I never received any official notice of my husband's death. Therefore I was forced to look into the matter myself. Through my lawyer I subsequently received a death certificate from the City of The Hague, staling that my husband had died on June 6, 1945. Almost three years later I found out that his body had been brought from the prison to the municipal hospital on a garbage cart. From all

of my possessions I had been left with just 3,637 guilders—from which they had the nerve to deduct 47.25 guilders for the expense of transporting my husband's body!

This led me onto the trail of a drama, which had taken place after the death of my husband. I went to the municipal hospital, where the head physician was visibly shocked by my appearance, which brought back to him memories of my husband's remains. He then sent me to the director of the *Wittebrug* Cemetery, who—he said—would know more about the case. When I asked this man about my husband, he was likewise appalled. He pointed to a row of files—all bearing the inscription "SECRET"—and then took me to the pauper's section of the cemetery. There, under a small stone with only the number 19, was a mass grave for 16 people, buried in four layers and all without coffins.

In 1950 I submitted a petition to Her Majesty the Queen, asking for the location where my husband was buried. In response I received a letter from the Queen's office informing me that my request had been forwarded to the Ministries of Justice and the Interior.

One year later I repeated my request to the Queen, informing her that I still had not received a reply to my enquiry. Till this day I have yet to receive such a reply, either from the Justice or the Interior Ministry.

I finally appealed to the mayor of The Hague, requesting the exhumation of my husband's remains, in order to rebury him at the family gravesite. The mayor rejected my request, and so did the Court of Appeals. They kept delaying until they were able to state that the site had already been cleared out.

Here again, I lodged an appeal. The Ministry of the Interior then informed me that my appeal had been declared "groundless".

In 1949, through my lawyer, Dr. Sassen in Nijmegen, I submitted a request with the Court for Special Jurisdiction to start posthumous judicial proceedings against my husband, thereby enabling me to personally defend him. The reply I received was that there would be no proceedings against my husband, because—so they declared—*"His means were negative."* In other words: he would not be able to pay, anyway.

Although I am not a Catholic, I had an audience with Pope Pius XII in the Holy Year 1950. This was arranged through Luciana Frassati, who lived on Vatican territory. She had known Meinoud from his time at the League of Nations.

I was met at the central station in Rome by Luciana, who took me to her palatial home. She had organised a party for me. More than a hundred guests were invited, all dressed in the most elegant attire. I myself was given a beautiful, long gown to wear. It was an unforgettable evening, with high society from all over Europe.

The party lasted till the early morning hours. It was an exceptionally cold winter, and the mountains around Rome were covered with a thick blanket of snow, contrasting with the warm atmosphere of the party.

Two days later I had my audience. After walking past the Swiss Guards in their splendid attire, I was greeted by a chamberlain, who brought me to a little room. Suddenly, a small door opened, and the Pope entered. He beckoned me to come with him to an adjoining room. Then he shook my hand.

I had known Hitler's radiant, blue eyes, which were almost hypnotic. But this man had such a penetrating gaze, that it was difficult not to lower one's eyes. Seconds felt like minutes.

I made a short speech in German, thanking him sincerely—in the name of all those without rights in our country, who had suffered grievously after the war—for the beautiful words he had spoken at the opening of the *Santo Anno* for us in Holland.

Then the Pope took over. He spoke extensively about my husband, about whom he had an amazing knowledge. I hardly needed to explain a thing.

Then he asked me about my sons. How did I expect to raise them? I smiled and told him that I came from a Protestant family and had absolutely no intention of allowing my sons to be raised as Catholics. If this were the price for getting his help in finding out about the death of my husband, I would have to disappoint him. The Pope denied that this was his intention, but said that he wanted to help me on behalf of my sons.

After the formal part of my visit was over, we went into another room, where about twenty nuns stood holding rosaries. The Pope

proceeded to bless their rosaries, which greatly enhanced the value for them. I couldn't help but notice with some satisfaction that he was not insensitive to feminine beauty, because he bestowed special attention on one exceptionally beautiful young sister. Everyone curtsied, and the audience was ended.

Returning to The Hague, I was taken to the Internuncio, Monsignor Giobbe. He greeted me cordially, and my conversation with him was most encouraging. He said that the Pope had expressed himself very favourably towards me. Msgr. Giobbe wanted to help me in clearing up the circumstances surrounding the murder of my husband. He promised to engage himself fully in order to bring this case to a satisfactory resolution. We agreed that I should receive an official declaration in which the murder of my husband would be acknowledged. For this I would pay a legal fee of only one guilder.

The Minister of Justice, Dr. Struycken, undertook an investigation in his ministry, to see whether there were any files relating to the murder of my husband. Because this was not immediately successful, I received the following notice through my lawyer:

As long as there is no ruling by the Government regarding the existence of a right to compensation for the heirs of Dr. Rost van Tonningen, the Ministry of Justice cannot invoke the statute of limitations.
Signed:
The Minister of Justice, Dr. Struycken

Following my meeting with the Pope, three attempts were made to run me down by automobile.

On March 15, 1951, Dr H. Mulderije succeeded Dr Struycken as Justice Minister. As a result, and despite of all promises, a written acknowledgement of the murder of my husband was never issued.

I was still living at Frankenslag 180. The old man, meanwhile, had died, making me the main resident of the house. This meant that my father—who was now a widower and unable to take care of himself—could stay in the Netherlands from time to time for a month. But because his residence permit was good for only one month, he had to travel back and forth constantly, between Goslar and The Hague. Nevertheless, we were both very happy, because he meant so

much, not only to me, but also to the three boys. He was like a father to them.

After being released from prison, my parole supervisor, Prof. M.A. de Block, an absolutely honest and highly capable man, arranged for my brother-in-law Nico Rost van Tonningen—who was Grand Master of the House of Her Majesty the Queen—to become guardian of my sons. Since he wanted my sons to go to a Christian school, I reported to the head of the designated school, a Mr. Oranje. He declared that my oldest son could attend the school, although not under his real name, but under an assumed name. This I absolutely refused. It meant that I had to look for another school, which wasn't all that easy.

Gradually, my father was no longer able to muster the strength to deal with all the difficulties he faced. One should not forget that he had lost two sons, his son-in-law, and then of late his beloved wife. In addition, his entire property—before the war both he and my mother had been very wealthy—was confiscated by the Dutch State.

On December 22, 1952, he suffered a heart attack and died in my house.

Prof. T. Goedewagen writes—

> ***About gods, whom we cannot touch or hear or see, but strongly feel their presence among us;***
>
> ***About people, whom we can touch, hear or see, there are many—very many, perhaps too many—And they are small and weak;***
>
> ***About heroes, of whom there are but few, very few.***
>
> ***They are neither gods nor humans, but godlike people in human form—great, noble figures, who become and remain visible from afar. It is they who lead mankind to the beautiful, the good and the true.***
>
> ***Yet humanity certainly does not comprehend them, but reviles, banishes and sometimes even kills them. Their life is difficult, but always pure and great. You should therefore strive to be like them. Do this, my friends, with all your passion, willpower and talent.***

The gods are invisible, And people small and weak. They need great and strong heroes. They demand them,

Uncle Tom
February 15, 1953
The Hague



Florentine S. Rost van Tonningen



Dr. Meinoud Marinus Rost van Tonningen

Chapter Eight

Solid Ground

Under My Feet

8.1 The Lucky Find of My House "Ben Trovato"

My children were getting bigger, and the influence of city life was beginning to make itself felt We needed a change. When my grandmother died, her house at Riouwstraat 216—where my husband and I had spent such a happy time—was to be sold. A friend of mine, who was a real-estate agent, persuaded me to go to the auction with him. As a direct heir of the deceased, I had the right to buy the house for the final bidding price. I was very fond of the house and the many memories it held. Nervously, I raised my hand at the last bid... and the house became my property.

Of course, I couldn't think about living in it myself. As it turned out, the tenant of this splendid house paid only 100 guilders per month. To me this didn't mean any financial relief, because the house would cost too much for maintenance.

At that time I received an invitation from my graphology teacher to attend one of his lectures. This would take place in a little hall in the Pulchri Studio building. The hall was too small for the many attendees, and we sat packed like herrings in a barrel. During the break, everybody was longing for a cup of coffee. The gentleman beside me kindly offered to get me one. I gladly accepted, but it was almost impossible to get through the crowd. Finally my neighbour succeeded in getting two cups of coffee for us. We continued talking about different aspects of graphology. Then he reached into his jacket pocket and showed me an envelope with a hand-written ad-

dress on it. To my not-so-slight surprise, it was the address of the house that I had just bought a few days before!

My interest in handwriting analysis waned. I asked the man how he had got the address. Somewhat irritated, he replied: "That's none of your business. I only asked you to analyse the handwriting." I said, "Yes I know, but this is the address of the house I just bought". He turned immediately away from me, exclaiming: "Oh heavens, then you must be Mrs. Rost van Tonningen. I don't want to have anything to do with you."

Meanwhile, the lecture resumed, and we had to keep our mouths shut. Our relations had cooled. My thoughts haunted me, making it impossible to concentrate on the lecture. My neighbour probably felt the same way, because at the end of the lecture he remained in his chair, just like me. Finally, we were alone in the hall. Then he said: "Mrs. Rost van Tonningen, I am Dr. van Schelven. I am the tenant at your house. Wouldn't it be most sensible to go to Riouwstraat 216 right now and talk everything over?" I willingly consented.

A short while later we were sitting in my house with a glass of wine. Dr. van Schelven had—in concert with my sister—commissioned a real estate agent to buy the house for him as cheaply as possible, and he felt disappointed that I had thwarted his plan. When I told him that the house was too expensive for me to live in anyway, we came to a surprising agreement. He said:

"I have been general practitioner in Velp (a small town near Arnhem), but my wife wanted to go back to The Hague. So here I am now. But I still haven't been able to sell my house in Velp."

We immediately agreed that he should pick me up the next day, and that we should drive to Velp to inspect the house.

Following the inspection we agreed to a trade. After all the misery of the previous years I felt it would be a relief to live here, even though the house was worn down quite a bit. He, too, was satisfied and felt that he had got a good bargain.

A few months later we moved from The Hague to Velp to start a new life—or so I thought. Dr. van Schelven and his wife and I became good friends. Eventually, we even went on holidays together to their home in Italy.

As I stood in the doorway of my new house, an old man came by and called to me. Wondering what he wanted, I went out and asked him. The man pointed with his cane to my house and asked: "What's written here on this house?" Even more astonished, I replied: *"Ben Trovato"* (which is Italian for "Well Found" or "Well Discovered"). "Yes," said the man, "but don't you see it's your name which is written there? It was in Velp long before you got here!" And the man was right, because *"Rovato"* could be interpreted as an abbreviation of R***ost*** *Van* Tonningen. Then he said, laughing. "Yes, but the word *Ben* means *Good* There are other Rost van Tonningens in the Netherlands, but I look upon you as the *Good* Rost van Tonningen." Then he took off his hat and disappeared. I never saw him again.

8.2 Settled in Velp

My acquaintances in The Hague were quite disappointed that I was leaving the city for good. I, too, felt an inner emptiness. My husband and I had loved this town very much. But what doesn't one do for one's children! They should grow up in a natural environment with plenty of fresh air and sports, not in a big city with all of its temptations.

My sons had a wonderful time in Velp. Their school had just opened, but it functioned very well. During their summer vacations they went horseback riding or visited youth camps of the Dutch Alpine Association, high in the Austrian Alps. After all, I was the daughter of a passionate mountaineer, and I hoped that my sons would love the mountains as much as my father and I.

My own future was still uncertain. I had gone through too much and kept too many things inside of me. My faith in mankind had suffered.

After careful consideration I decided to establish a small business. This would bring in some money to raise my boys. Besides, it would also provide some badly needed social contacts for me.

I called my firm *Verina* and registered with the chamber of commerce. First, I dealt in ceramic animals: deer, elephants, monkeys and rabbits. Each piece was a pleasure to look at. But, unfortunately, these ceramic figures were so fragile they couldn't be shipped. As a result, there was no money to be made with them.

Then a Belgian firm was recommended to me. It was on the verge of bankruptcy, but with good management and marketing, it could still be successful. The offer was tempting. And so, wholly unexpectedly, I slipped into the world of engineering, with all its possibilities and problems. What I had previously detested—namely technology—now captivated me no end. I began to take an interest in technical problems, which surprised me most of all.

A run-down house on the main street in Velp became mine through a mortgage loan. A woman secretary and a technician were employed part-time. Soon I had to hire additional personnel.

Initially, I worked mainly for foreign firms, like the Austrian Hillebrand Company, whose industrial washing machines I sold at a modest stand at the Utrecht trade fair. Sales prospered, and everything looked well at the beginning. But then the problems began: motors got damaged, spare parts had to be imported, etc. Import and export permits were needed, entailing a lot of work. In the end there was hardly any profit left.

Then I had a new idea. I felt that I needed a product of my own. Therefore I developed the concept of a laundry *dryer mill,* to be put up in one's garden. It would rotate in the wind, making the laundry dry faster. The prototype was installed in the garden in front of my office. It was much too heavy and primitive, but it worked, which was the main thing.

After a few improvements my dryer mill was put on the market. I had a skilful young man demonstrate the apparatus at the Utrecht fair. It was an immediate success. We were all enthusiastic, and large orders followed. Soon our workshop became too small, and we had to transfer part of our production to the garden.

In the middle of the garden there was a big chestnut tree. My employees loathed this tree. Not only leaves, but also ripe chestnuts would fall down, often landing on their heads. I would continually

hear them muttering, "Damned chestnuts, they're going to put a hole in my head yet".

To remove the tree I had to ask for permission from the municipal office. But they declined, saying the tree was much too beautiful. So what was I to do? One of my sons was a good sportsman, and he offered to climb the tree and saw off the thickest limbs. I agreed. But the moment the boy climbed up the tree, two distinguished gentlemen from the municipal office appeared in front of my office and asked to be admitted. They had a paper with them, warning me to leave the tree alone. I invited them to have a cup of coffee and had to promise that I would let it stand. After all the formalities were over, they wanted to look back briefly at the tree.

This I allowed them, of course. But what we saw next I shall never forget My son Grimbert was sitting on top of the tree, sawing away at the branches. The crown was just hanging on the bark and was about to fall down. I was shocked, and the men from the municipal office were furious. I tried to call my son, but he was much too busy and didn't hear a thing. The men went away.

Two days later I received a letter from the municipal office ordering me to clear the tree away within a few days. Otherwise my firm would be fined, as the tree had become an unbearable eyesore. Well, they were right about that At last, with much effort and loud cheers, the chestnut tree plunged to the ground, partially: blocking the street. The police were needed to close the street off to traffic.

Soon after this I requested permission to build a new workshop. The permission came quickly, the workshop was built, and our dryer mill was a great success, sold by many leading Dutch firms.

8.3 Love and Intrigue

"Hello. To whom am I speaking? Is that you, Florrie? This is your cousin, Jan Fentener van Vlissingen. It's been a long time since we last spoke to each other."—"Yes, how are you Jan?"—"I'm fine, but

I heard you've had some difficulties."—"Yes, everything hasn't been so easy for me. But what hurts me most is that my oldest son isn't doing so well. My sons lack the authority of a father."—*"Yes,* Florrie, that's just what I wanted to talk with you about. My children have all left home, except for Paul. He hasn't finished school yet. If it's all right with you, I would like to have Grimbert stay with us. Then Paul won't be all by himself."—"Look, Jan, that's the last thing I could think of."—"Yes Florrie, I can well imagine that. But don't forget what you and your husband did for me during the war, when I was arrested by Rauter. I wouldn't have got away alive, if your husband hadn't stepped in for me."—"Thanks a lot for your call, Jan. I'll talk it over with Grimbert."

That same evening a discussion took place between me and my son. I told him that, as a widow, I could give him only so much. The lifestyle of my cousin Fentener van Vlissingen much more resembled the life of his father, should he still be alive. "The choice is yours, my son." The unexpected offer seemed tempting to him. The village of Velp was never much to his liking. Now he had an opportunity to build a new life. Besides, he had already spoken several times with his Uncle Jan, who seemed quite likeable to him. Yes, he would gladly accept the offer.

This meant additional expense for me. Even so I was inclined to think that with this offer new perspectives would open up, something I was unable to offer him. A short time later my son was all packed and ready to set out for a new future. Inside of me I felt pride, because he now lived in the *Gooi* region, where I had always felt so happy, where I had known almost every tree and every family, and where I had been married.

In retrospect I have to admit that sending my son to his Uncle Jan very much sharpened the contrast between our two worlds. As a young man it's easier to choose the shining path, but appearances can often be deceptive. And there was still another factor, the significance of which could not yet be realised. Queen Juliana would visit my cousin's home at least once a week. She loved the simple family life, enjoying the plain food and homely entertainment which she could not get at the court. She was very fond of acting, often performing the part of maidservant in some little stage play. This was

a way for her to feel connected with the people. She was a queen who still loved her people.

My relations with my cousin, meanwhile, did not improve. He could no longer derive any advantage from my husband's connections, and I had nothing to offer. Sometimes, when I had something important to discuss with my son, I was not even allowed into the house but had to stand outside and talk through a small bathroom window. Thank God, there was a very nice couple, both of them former NSB members, who also lived there. Like me they had lost everything, and now they had to earn their living as domestic help. They would keep me informed about my son.

After Jan's son, Paul, had finished school and left the house, I received a phone call that I should take Grimbert home with me again. One year was enough—they now had other interests. This came as a bolt out of the blue. During the year my son had become accustomed to their lifestyle. For him, as well as for me, it was impossible to let him come back to Velp. What were we to do now?

My son reassured me by saying that he had a friend whose father wouldn't mind having him live with them. I was very happy to hear this, and asked my son to arrange a meeting.

In my old secondhand car I drove to Baarn, looking for the address. Finally, I stood in front of a high, black fence. The gate stood open, but—it belonged to the crown land of *Soestdijk* Palace. I didn't know what to do. Then a gentleman appeared at the front door, beckoning me to drive in. He greeted me with the words, "Hello, Florrie, you are expected." Astonished, I replied: "You couldn't possibly be Jan van der Hoeven, our old friend, who wrote such wonderful articles in our weekly paper *De Waag?* It simply can't be true!"—"Well,- Florrie, times have changed. We don't talk about that anymore. Welcome to our house."

How was such a thing possible? In the past he had been editor of *De Waag* and very pro-German. Now he was the private secretary of Queen Juliana! And so my son came to live with my old friend Jan, who, however, had meanwhile adjusted himself to the standard Christian ideas and notions of the court circles. In conformity with the methods of the Oxford Group, believers had to be confronted over and over again with their sins. Within a few months these con-

fessions had become such an obsession with my son, that he lost all interest in life and neglected his studies.

My brother-in-law Nico Rost van Tonningen, who was Grand Master to the Queen, alerted me to the danger. He was annoyed, moreover, by the fact that a young lad like this—the little boy of his brother Meinoud, who in spite of their differing political outlooks had been very dear to him—lived at the court and had apparently established more-than-friendly relations with Princess Margriet. Nico always remained grateful towards his brother, because Meinoud had presented an entire library to the German prisoner-of-war camp, where he was being held. After his return from captivity he was shaken by the news of the unexpected death of his brother.

The well-founded arguments of my brother-in-law, the guardian of my sons—together with my own concern about my son—caused me to go immediately to Baarn and take Grimbert home with me.

When I arrived, the door stood open. I reached the upper floor unobserved. There I found my son lying sick in bed, with Princess Margriet at his side. I told him to put on his clothes, pack his suitcase and come home with me. We took leave of the princess and travelled home.

It was another trusted NSB man who called me with the message: "Let Grimbert come with me. I'll take care of him and see that he gets well again." My son had been thoroughly brainwashed and was undernourished. First of all, he had to learn how to eat again, instead of just consuming spiritual pap.

In retrospect, the whole thing seems like a well-contrived scheme born out of the guilt complex of the Royal Family over the death of my husband, in which Prince Bemhard had played such a key role. Out of a feeling of guilt they wanted to come to a reconciliation. Queen Juliana—inasmuch as she let her heart speak, and not politics—must have been the prime mover in this.

Or maybe it *was* politics after all. The reconciliation was to be accomplished through a union between Princess Margriet and my son Grimbert. After that the problem could be considered resolved. But because of the way events turned out, this feeling of guilt has till this day not been erased.

Throughout this whole episode I was able to appreciate my brother-in-law Nico even more. He often referred to the strong ties between the Royal House and the Rost van Tonningen family. With his father having been Adjutant General of Queen Wilhelmina, and he himself Grand Master to the Crown, he felt that the development of such personal relationships would be out of place. This view of my brother-in-law also has general validity for the other reigning families of Europe. It was a matter of style and principle, which could never be disrupted—especially considering the still-unresolved death of his brother Meinoud.

8.4 Midsummer Solstice 1983

The summer of 1983 signified a turning point in the attitude of the outside world towards me. In the Nordic countries the Midsummer and Midwinter solstices are celebrated everywhere. But in the Netherlands, and particularly at my home, it was regarded as a resurgence of National Socialism.

Unexpectedly, the leftist newspaper *Volkskrant* brought out a fictitious account of a private gathering with friends in my garden, suggesting a completely fake connection between our Midsummer celebration and the Ku Klux Klan. Despite the absurdity of this lie, the report was deadly, and they were able to stir up hatred against me. My house was pelted with stones and hit with slingshots. Over 100 window panes were shattered. Almost every night I was woken up by bomb threats. Even my dog was poisoned. Thank God, she miraculously survived, though not without lasting damage to her health.

I never received the pension to which I am entitled as the widow of the president of the Bank of the Netherlands. But now even the small pension which I *had* been receiving for over forty years, because my husband had been a Member of Parliament before the war,

was taken from some dusty bureaucratic drawer and challenged by my political adversaries!

There were hearings in Parliament. Ambulances were brought in to carry away those who might faint at the mere thought of the great injustice they suffered, because of the payment of even this small pension to me. In short, it was one big theatre, all broadcast live on television. Even today they are still pressing for the government to take away this pension.

The press then discovered that I had bought a double grave—for my husband, who still had no final resting place, and myself—near Velp on one of the most beautiful spots in Holland. The mayor, of course, had to act immediately to prevent such an outrage. Just imagine, Mrs. Rost van Tonningen, and possibly even her husband, being buried in this cemetery! There are five or six English pilots buried there; they would need to be reburied somewhere else if this were to happen, etc., etc. ...

But the worst was yet to come. My bank, in collaboration with my notary, forced me to give up ownership of my firm by threatening to withdraw all credit. My firm Verina—which had been in existence for 34 years and had a real worth of over a million Dutch guilders and a current account of over 200,000 guilders—was assigned to a former prizefighter from Surinam, for one Dutch guilder. This man, a certain R.A. Kenswil, was put forward by the RABO Bank, despite the fact that he had already gone bankrupt once before.

No rights whatsoever were granted to me. As one witness later described it: "When the Notary brought up something in your favour, the Negro's nostrils would flare with rage. The notary feared that Mr. Kenswil would become violent and drag him across the desk. So, thinking about his wife and children, he declined to do anything in your interest."

I had just been recovering from a serious surgical operation. Taken completely by surprise, I was unable to fully grasp what was happening. They made reassuring promises, saying that after a period of four years, all my assets would be returned to me. I wouldn't need to work anymore and would henceforth be able to enjoy the fruits of my life's work.

The result of this devious act was that the bank installed Mr. Kenswil as head of the firm, with the obvious intent of bankrupting the company, thus making it possible to go after my personal assets. Immediately after taking over, Mr. Kenswil requested an audit by the Revenue Service. Suddenly all kinds of financial records had disappeared. My request that my records be returned to me was ignored. I was accused of having fraudulently taken money from the company. One lie followed another, and I was buried in an avalanche of additional assessments, against which no appeal was allowed. Personal bankruptcy was only avoided by timely help from friends abroad.

On February 26, 1987, Mr. Kenswil visited my home with Drs. A. Stolk, regional representative of the accounting firm Amil in Velp. They proceeded to tell me that my firm was going to be declared bankrupt. I was speechless. It was the end of a flourishing firm and 34 years of work and effort.

It all became clear to me. I had to be destroyed, and in this they almost succeeded. Even my personal property was involved. It's easy to find a stick to beat a dog. Only the moral and material support of good friends enabled me to surmount this black hole.

One year later I again met Drs. Stolk, who asked me if I was still angry with him, going on to say that the whole thing had been purely political, nothing more...

My life's work had to be destroyed, and myself with it. So much for our enemies!

I could talk about many other things—about house searches, bomb threats, attacks in the press—all too much to describe here. Thus did an innocent Midsummer celebration in my garden turn into a personal drama.



Congratulations of *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himml
to Dr. Rost van Tonningen

Chapter Nine

Coming to Terms

9.1 The Eagle's Nest

It was in July 1990 that I had a chance to visit Berchtesgaden. Upon my arrival I went directly to the Hotel "Zum Türken", where I would be staying for a couple of days. From the window of my luxurious room I could see the trees which, after 45 years of growth, now obscured the place where Hitler's beautiful *Berghof once* stood.

Only those who remember can still find the foundations of the *Berghof* today. On Wednesday, April 25, 1945, the Obersalzberg was attacked by the 617th British Bomber Squadron. In 1952 this architectural masterpiece was blown up and completely demolished by the American occupation force. They felt called upon to do so, because they feared that it could become a place of pilgrimage.

But in spite of their efforts, this God-chosen spot of land has indeed become a place of pilgrimage for those who feel themselves deeply bound to the past. It would be interesting to know how many people have a little piece of stone from the B*erghof in* their homes—a relic taken from "Holy Ground".

The next day I took a bus up the mountain to a parking space below the *Kehlsteinhaus.* From there a long tunnel leads toward the entrance of an elevator, which in 45 seconds takes you to the "Eagle's Nest" on the mountain's summit. This was the *Führer's* favourite place—his own paradise near our "Valhalla". From here there is a magnificent view of the Watzmann and Hohe Goll peaks.

With some difficulty I was able to find a seat somewhat away from the omnipresent American soldiers, who were wandering curiously about the place. In all stillness I sat by a window, enjoying the

wonderful view. Soon I was deeply absorbed in my thoughts. How different things were, compared with in Hitler's time! Now the whole area was taken over by the Americans.

How well I could remember the moment when, together with my husband, I found myself in approximately the same spot, rejoicing at the wealth of simple beauty which Hitler had collected about him! His imposing writing desk, the precious chairs, the fireplace carved with eagles and Swastikas, and not least, the very special chandeliers. Where had all of these things gone?

Moving away from these sad reflections, my attention turned once more to the outside world. I looked upon the uniquely beautiful mountains, seeing them through the eyes of the man who once found strength and inspiration here for the terribly difficult tasks which he had taken upon himself. Distant visions passed before my eyes, beckoning me for an answer.

From my handbag I once again took the transcript of the interrogation of Rauter at the Arnhem prison. On February 13, 1947—exactly two years to the day after the bombing of Dresden—he recalled a speech by the *Führer.*

> **Rauter:** The *Führer* said to me, "The Dutch should not get too excited; it is simply nonsense what they are imagining there."
>
> Hitler envisaged a very loose co-operation on a purely commercial basis. He would have deeply regretted it if too close a relationship between Germany and Holland had caused Britain and America to take away the Dutch colonies. The *Führer* deemed a reorganisation of Europe to be necessary, and said that he would be satisfied if the Dutch could simply realise this.
>
> On the one hand, one could no longer consider the whole of the Soviet Union as part of Europe. It had become an Eurasiatic state. Britain, for its part, might be Germanic, but it stood with only one foot in Europe. Its interests in Europe were of a secondary nature. Only Germany was able to organise things on the Continent.
>
> In Hitler's view the Germanic states in Europe were to work together more closely. With the colossal and expensive arsenal of heavy weaponry being a luxury that the smaller states could not

> afford, it was essential that the air forces, navy and armoured

> forces be uniform. He emphasised that the Dutch should concentrate their efforts on the navy, together with the Frisians of northwest Germany. Apart from purely technical aspects, our armies were to remain separate. Holland would keep her self-government. If the Dutch would agree to this and adjust themselves accordingly, the *Führer was* prepared to be quite generous.

This speech by Hitler has never been made public... I folded the paper up again and continued my excursion through Berchtesgaden.

I have been witness to an exciting and historically significant time, with many high and low points. I always tried to master changing situations, learning to fulfil my mission in this world in accordance with the spiritual basis of my life.

As a child I already felt it a privilege to have such extraordinary parents. Ours was truly a "Sunshine House". One could feel the presence of the Sun. I loved all creatures, particularly our faithful dogs, but also the cats, pigeons, guinea pigs, swans, and even frogs and lizards. This was my world, in which I was happy.

As a student I made many important contacts, at home as well as abroad. My work in the forest of Sumatra was an enriching experience. As a woman I felt the happiness of giving life to three fine sons, but after a very happy married life I became a widow much too early. Nevertheless, life showed me its good side in activities and experiences. As mother and grandmother, and during 34 years as a businesswoman, I still found time for painting.

I lived life to the full, and am still standing in it with vitality and delight, experiencing its pleasures and sufferings. Today I am the grandmother of twelve healthy, wonderful grandchildren, eight boys and four girls. With our marriage, my husband and I laid the foundation for new life. I feel that this magnificent music of creation bears within it an ever-renewing beginning, an onset to something better and higher. It signifies the promise of unity, the striving toward fulfilment.

Thanks to my husband's high position, I could on numerous occasions make the acquaintance of persons of historical greatness

and nobility. I encountered many brilliant men and women, who represented the highest spiritual and moral values.

In the first place I would like to name Adolf Hitler, a man who gave his whole life for his people and heroically fulfilled his mission, a man to whom Fate assigned the task of staving for greatness, because he was firmly convinced of the triumph of that which is good and positive. I had the privilege to meet this man several times in person—in the historic Hotel Adlon, as well as at the B*erghof* in Berchtesgaden and together with Winifred Wagner in Bayreuth.

Who, of all the great men of this world, has ever succeeded in uniting men and women of all classes, positions and economic spheres,—aristocrats and workingmen, farmers and shopkeepers—in a common faith in their people? He led his people in a common effort, with the goal of strengthening Germany racially, making it economically self-reliant and politically independent. Following a period of national disgrace, he led them back to self-respect and the affirmation of life and to the service of their fatherland. He was prepared to serve and sacrifice himself, leading his people unselfishly. In Germany in those days the question was: What *can* I do for my people, and what am *I prepared to* do?

Full of confidence in the *Führer* and in itself, Germany created a realm in which life was good for its entire people. What power and simplicity did the *Führer* radiate! The mere fact that, though a non-smoker himself, he bought cigars for his guests in a small store in Berchtesgaden, chatting cheerfully with the proprietor, or that he grew edelweiss in his spare time—all this testifies to his simple modesty. A most affectionate understanding for young and old alike emanated from him.

One day when we were on our way to the B*erghof,* we had a flat tire, which caused us to be one hour too late. Upon our arrival Hitler shook our hands and with concern asked if something had happened to us. My husband wanted to apologise. But before he could say a word, Hitler took my hand and asked: "Are you well? But, yes—then everything is all right." We followed him into the house, fully at ease.

Besides Hitler I met many other leading personalities: *SS Reichsführer* Himmler and his staff, Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Economy and president of the Reichsbank

Walter Funk, vice-president of the Reichsbank Emil Puhl—one of the best financial experts of Europe, according to my husband—and even Hjalmar Schacht, president of the Reichsbank during the Weimar Republic and under Hitler until 1939. He was an acquaintance of my husband, and after the war he repeatedly insisted: "But, Frau Florrie, your husband was a much more remarkable talent than I was." Knowing him to be a typical charmer, I always returned his compliments.

Seyss-Inquart, the Reich Commissioner for the Netherlands, was another person whom I often met and spoke with. He was an absolute gentleman.

Several times I was Himmler's table partner, and always had interesting conversations with him. We were invited to his beautiful hunting lodge on a number of occasions, to go hunting chamois. He had the appealing idea of calling all ethnic Germans around the globe back to Germany, to settle them on the vast eastern territories. As he put it: "That German blood, which emigrated generations ago, w*ills* to return to the land of its origin one day. But they are not to come merely as visitors, or perhaps as enemy soldiers of a foreign power..."

Himmler saw—as did my husband—the future of Europe in the development of Germany's eastern territories and neighbouring Russia. There lay the future of the Aryan race. There was an abundance of land, water and energy in the form of natural gas, coal and wind. Moors could be drained and transformed into productive agricultural land, which could then be settled by ethnic Germans, as well as Norwegians, Dutchmen, Flemings and all other people capable of building up the land, setting up villages and cities in a greater Aryan empire. In this way the situation of Germany as a "people without living space" would finally come to an end.

From all of this one can see that these historic personalities were simply human beings like you and I. Hollywood's demonisation of people who stand up for their own identity, for their traditions and ancestral roots, is completely alien to us. Germany forms the heart of Europe, beside which Holland—today spiritually still small—could rise to a key position. Therefore, Holland has a great responsibility, and our people must not be led astray.

Hitler was the exponent of folkish thinking. This unity of *Volk* arid *Reich* gave rise to forces which give mankind a goal and direction, by fusing the forces of life and mankind into one another.

The Third Reich is gone. *They* stood on the barricades. The Fourth Reich has already begun. Now *we* stand on the barricades, full of respect for the sacrifices that have been made. This is an expression of our bond with history. After 1933 mighty storms raged around us. But now we have reached the final stage. The time of decision has come!

What we are witnessing today is the reversal of good into evil, and of evil into good. Here lies the main reason for the ever-increasing criminalisation of our society. There are those who have purposely made Europe's heart sick and choked its blood supply—because Germany with its eastern territories forms the heartland, and he who has the heartland has the world.

Where does the contemporary world get the right to accuse a country like Germany of every conceivable evil deed, which it never committed? Thinking of the future, the German soldier—together with many European volunteers—fought for high ideals. Killing for the sake of killing was something entirely foreign to him. One should rather speak of him as a soldier of peace, for he sacrificed himself for his country and his people to gain peace, the holy flame and honour. These fighters felt bound to their culture, something plainly recognisable in their magnificent songs. How beautiful they were!

Obviously, many people cannot accept the fact that Germany is not only the land of technology, but above all the land of poets and thinkers, from Kant and Hegel to Goethe, Schiller, Hölderlin and Heidegger, to Wagner and Nietzsche.

9.2 Called to a Higher Life

One of the most disgusting crimes in the Netherlands after the war was the arrest of about 200,000 people—NSB-members, real or

alleged—on the basis of false testimony. All sorts of criminal elements were appointed as guards, in order to torment the prisoners in the most hideous ways. Many died, including my own husband, who also fell victim to them.

Today's perpetual fuss about human rights was absent at the end of World War II. At that time the victors forgot all about those same human rights. They glorified the crimes which they themselves had committed, including those against their own compatriots, who had fought for the interests of their country—unlike those who betrayed their people to the so-called "New World Order" created by an international cabal at Bretton Woods in 1944.

And so it is interesting that the legitimacy of the Dutch wartime government in exile in London has now come under criticism. Recently the Dutch historian, Dr. Nanda van der Zee, wrote in her 1996 book, *Om erger te voorkomen (To Avoid Something Worse)*, that the government of Dr. Seyss-Inquart was "completely legal"—unlike the London exile government, which she called a "rebel government". In consequence, all of the so-called "London Edicts" made by that particular war "government" were illegal! (van der Zee, pp. 148-155).

The behaviour of this "government" was equally illegal according to recognised international law. After the war about 200,000 National Socialist fell victim to the most horrible persecution and mistreatment in Holland. As one example among many, the Dutch High Commissioner of the Queen for the province of Overijssel had his perfectly good leg amputated—"as a joke"!

The brains of my husband, the lawful president of the Bank of the Netherlands, were smashed in with a rifle butt, after he had been forced to endure the most unspeakable tortures. The Dutch authorities, which are well aware of the identities of the murderers, have systematically sabotaged all attempts to bring these criminals to justice. My husband, of course, was one of the few with intimate knowledge of the composition of the illegitimate Dutch exile government. At all cost, he had to be prevented from appearing in court, where he would have been able to name very prominent names and present evidence which would have compromised many "good" Dutchmen, thereby "endangering the governability of our country",

as Mrs. van der Zee expressed it. In other words, my husband knew too much and had to be silenced!

In a personal interview with the Bureau of War Documentation in Amsterdam, it was confirmed beyond question that during the post-war persecution of National Socialists, their homes were plundered, their accounts stolen and their possessions sold. During this same period, of course, the entire Dutch media began a systematic anti-German hate campaign, brainwashing our people and fostering a false, anti-German sentiment which poisons our national soul to this day.

In the memorial book for the 175th anniversary of the Dutch Court of Appeals there was an article devoted to the trial of Anton A. Mussert. It was noted that under normal circumstances Mussert, the leader of the NSB, would have received at the very most eight years in prison. And so, it follows that his death sentence was nothing other than judicial murder. Political expediency, not the law, was the primary purpose of this trial. The prosecutor, Dr. Zaayer, was only looking for legal statutes with which to condemn Mussert. Mussert stuck to a purely political defence, Dr. Zaayer to a judicial, and the two with their argumentation completely talked past each other. As the defendant Mussert was fighting for his life, the normal course would have been to pay proper attention. But it had already been decided that heads should roll. Dr. Zaayer didn't have the slightest interest in the great injustice being committed against Mussert.

Max Blokzijl was also arrested. He had given outstanding political commentary over the radio. It is especially shameful that even he was sentenced to death. He was a man who enjoyed the respect both of friend and foe. One of his last statements was:

"Since common criminals now have their chance, they are deliberately changing the concept of crime."

Anton Mussert and Max Blokzijl behaved courageously during their trials, setting an example for many others. They died the death of heroes. The judiciary ought to be deeply ashamed of having sentenced to death such noble, idealistic men, who only wanted the best

for their people. But we know that they have been called to a higher life, where these judges have nothing to say.

Clearly the arrest of my husband in 1940 was in itself illegal. It had been instigated by Baron Speyart van Woerden, public prosecutor in s'Hertogenbosch. This occurred following my husband's pursuit of the scandalous events in Oss—involving child molestation by powerful manufacturers and clergymen—when he made enemies of some mighty men of the Roman Catholic Church. After his arrest my husband was taken south over the Dutch border, with the intent of bringing him to England. En route they ran into the staff of Prince Bernhard, who was on his way north. Completely and totally against all international law, Prince Bernhard wanted to have my husband and the other prisoners summarily shot, without any legal proceedings. Fortunately, his adjutant, Colonel Pfaff, was able to prevent this.

When Prince Bernhard again met my husband in May 1945, he ordered him—again contrary to all rules of law—transported immediately to Utrecht. From there he was transferred to the state penitentiary in Scheveningen, with the intention of letting him perish there. Because he was well aware of the chaotic conditions prevailing at the prison, Prince Bernhard must be regarded as the person primary responsible for the tragic death of my husband. An indication that even within the Royal Family certain individuals were inclined to the opinion that Prince Bernhard was guilty of my husband's death can be seen in the relationship of Princess Margriet with my oldest son, which had its origin in the guilt complex of Queen Juliana.

I am ever grateful to my brother-in-law Nico for siding unconditionally with me in this difficult situation. Although he certainly did not share the political views of his brother, from his many connections with the former Resistance he knew that my husband had never betrayed anyone. On the contrary, he was able to help many.

But that came as no real surprise to my brother-in-law. As he told me, "Oh, Florrie, I always knew that, when all was said and done, Meinoud was my brother."

The Dutch government also arrested *Obergruppenführer* Rauter—who on March 6, 1945, was shot by the Resistance at *Woeste Hoeve* between Arnhem and Apeldoorn, but miraculously survived—in

order to give testimony about the German occupation. In prison he was interrogated by Prof. Dr. N.W. Posthumus and Drs. L. de Jong. He was then condemned to death by special administration and executed by firing squad.

Shortly before his execution, I was allowed to bid farewell to Rauter in prison. He stood before me, tall and unbroken. We looked each other firmly in the eye. "Frau Florrie," he said to me, "do you still remember how we once spoke about your husband, and I told you: If the moment should come that we have to stand in deep reverence at the grave of your husband, fallen for his people and fatherland—perhaps with the distinction of having received the Iron Cross, maybe even the Knight's Cross and the German Cross in Gold—then you could be proud of your husband.'

"Today, your husband is no more. I have heard that he was cruelly murdered and thrown into a mass grave. But now you can be *really* proud of him. They called your husband the last real Dutchman, because he always stood up for the interests of his country, even against the Reich Commissioner. No-one else dared to speak like that. He was an absolute National Socialist, but also a Dutchman to the core. You know, when I'm in Valhalla later today, I am going to tell him what a courageous wife he has, and that his sons are healthy and well. Then he's certainly going to be very happy."

Deeply moved, we took leave of each other.

Rauter was granted his last request to be allowed to wear his officer's cap and say a brief prayer. His prayer consisted of just one word: *"Fire!"*—so that he was shot by his own order.

How proud can we be of **our men!**

9.3 The Situation Today

At the end of August 1990, Mr. Johan Wildschut—a former Resistance member whom I had known for ten years—came to see me.

Wildschut belonged to Holland's intellectual elite. As a dedicated member of the Resistance, he had been an inmate at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. After his return to the Netherlands in 1945, he discovered that even more horrible things were taking place in the post-war Dutch concentration camps than anything the Germans were accused of. He was shocked at the political developments in Holland and told me of his disappointment.

He asked me if he could read the manuscript of my book, on which I had been working for the last four months. After some hesitation I agreed. Two days later he came back with a journalist, who asked my permission to write an article for the *NRC-Handelsblad.* On September 22 they published a front-page article on my manuscript, stating the following historical facts:

1. **Meinoud M. Rost van Tonningen was murdered.**
2. **He had refused to flee to Brazil—although offered help by members of the Resistance—because he wanted to assume responsibility for his fatherland.**

On October 3, Mr. Wildschut declared on national television:

*Rost van Tonningen was murdered. I have the evidence from my **own** sources.*

On November 19 he phoned me to confirm his statement that my husband had been murdered. "Remember, it's impossible to crush your skull by falling from the first floor. This would only break your neck. But your skull can only be shattered by something like a blow from a rifle butt."

Five hours later Wildschut was found dead in his bed.

Important witnesses to the violent death of my husband are:

- **Mr. P.M.C.J. Hamer, head of police in The Hague during the German occupation. Drew up a report on the case, in which he described how a prison warden threw my husband over the approximately 1.25-metre-high balustrade of the first floor. After managing to hold on**

to the balustrade with one hand, his skull was then smashed with a rifle butt.

- **Mr. W. Kreischer, cousin of M.M. Rost van Tonningen. Shortly after June 6, 1945, he wanted to visit his cousin. He was taken to a shed, where he was confronted with the disfigured remains of my husband. From their state he could only conclude that his cousin had died a violent death. An account of this was later written down by Mr. Kreischer, who died shortly afterwards.**

- **Mr. W. van der Kolk, librarian in the Scheveningen prison at the time of Rost van Tonningen's death. Me had to literally sweep together my husband's remains. The trauma of this resulted in a two-year stay in a psychiatric hospital.**

- **Dr. Michael, director of the Municipal Hospital in The Hague. Declared: "The mere remembrance of how Rost van Tonningen's mortal remains were carried into the hospital made me shudder with horror."**

Finally, I would like to quote from the Flemish magazine *Journaal,* February 21, 1991:

One can hardly persist in calling Rost van Tonningen a collaborator. He wasn't a collaborator—he was a National Socialist. He represented Holland within this international movement, and he did this in a way his fellow believers understood: consistently, hard and uncompromising. No-one else could afford to scold the Germans as he did, if he deemed it necessary to defend Dutch interests against them.

Men, do not believe that I have betrayed my country! I have acted with devotion and sincerity as a good patriot, and I shall die as such.

Van Oldenbarneveldt (Dutch statesman, 1547-1619, shortly before his execution)

Didn't the Brothers de Witt and van Oldenbarneveldt suffer a similar fete? Today there is someone else who is reviled as a traitor. But a truthful history would assign my husband a place of honour among the ranks of the very best in the annals of our country's history.

Even though a half century has passed since the end of the Second World War, most people still do not realise *who* caused that war, and for what it was *actually* fought. And, one might ask, who in the end was the *real* victor?

Before the war, it was still relatively easy to get at the truth. Today, with the aid of clever and perfected techniques for falsification, the truth is successfully concealed.

Isn't there something fundamentally sick in our self-satisfied Democracy? Isn't it built on lies and malicious practices? When a so-called constitutional state bases its criminal law on Bolshevik legal principles, does that make it legitimate?

The ideological differences between today's major political parties are so small that they are hardly more than variations on the same theme. One cannot speak of real popular representation anymore. As Dutch professor J.W. Oerlemans so nicely put it, today we have a "one-party state in the Netherlands".

Before the war, patriotism and racial loyalty determined democratic consciousness. Today this has fundamentally changed. These changes have to do with World War II. Two ideologies—namely Marxism and National Socialism—clashed and struggled for dominance. Marxism is economic determinism, with class struggle as a consequence. National Socialism is biological determinism, to ensure the survival of one's own people and race. With the collapse of the economies of the Soviet Union and other former East Bloc countries, Marxism has been exposed as a delusion, as Prof. Oerlemans so aptly stated. With the Allied victory it became a widespread belief,

which even today dominates public opinion in many countries of the world. Now this belief—which has demonstrated its uselessness everywhere—has now landed in a vacuum. Historically, thinking in terms of class struggle has become an anachronism. Everywhere in the former East Bloc countries one sees the rise of national movements. This means that the normal ebb and flow continues, as it always has.

To be sure, adherents of the Marxist faith will challenge this course of events to the utmost. During Stalin's rule approximately 70 million people were murdered, because they didn't conform to his idea of a Marxist society. As we must conclude quite soberly today, Marxism has caused enormous misery over the course of time.

After World War II, the family, as the basic unit of the national community, has been destroyed, with the aim of bringing about racial chaos. The crux of that struggle was whether or not the people wanted such chaos.

The British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, was inclined to the opinion that America and the Jews had forced England to take part in the war. The Jewish declaration of war in the *Daily Express* on March 24, 1933, is irrefutable proof of this. Even in the Netherlands we felt this destructive influence. Our National Socialist Movement (NSB) was subjected to a merciless witch-hunt, which was a crime against the Dutch people. The main aim of such anti-national activities was—and is—the destruction of the "inner fatherland" of every real Dutchman by portraying everything that reminds one of it as criminal—on the radio, on television, and even in school. Today, every Dutch person must seriously pose the question as to why all this is allowed to happen at all. The answer is simply that this is only possible in a sham democracy, where ministerial responsibility is a farce and Parliament is made up of carefully selected elements indifferent to the people. Our Constitution of April 9, 1885, could not have foreseen such a development. At that time every deputy still thought as a true Dutchman and stood up for the national interest. Our farmers still formed the heart of our society. The fact that today international finance plays such a key role makes the immediate future uncertain for all of us.

It was the entry of the Americans into the war which started an era of Americanism. Rather than bringing about their introduction to European history, it instead denied Europe a new beginning out of its own roots.

Today's democratic state stands exposed as a genocidal entity. An encouraging development is the abandonment by the peoples of Eastern Europe of the Marxist way of thinking, which is now spreading to the West National Socialism believes in the natural order and is opposed to everything which disturbs or will disturb it The uninhibited abuse of sexuality, drugs, and alcohol, etc., the lack of respect for human life, which is manifested in the abortion of sound and healthy foetuses—in our eyes, all of this is criminal.

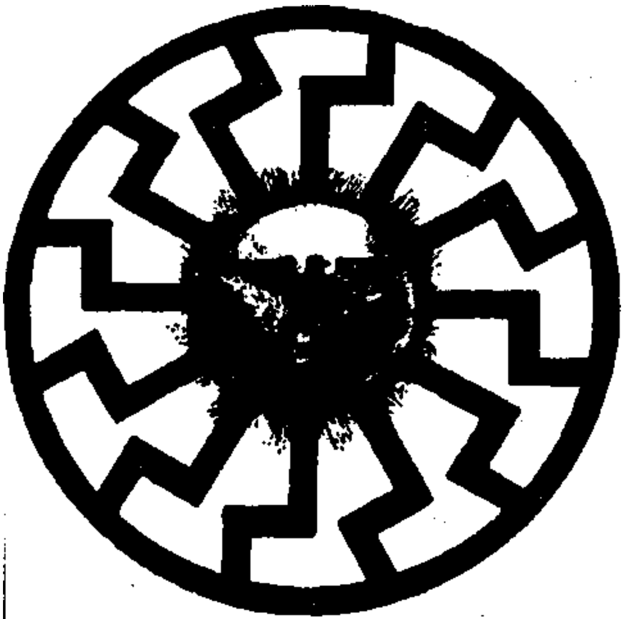
Not that the old inhibitions and restrictions were always right. Certainly not. And here National Socialism must be seen as a revolutionary renewing process, searching for a positive alternative to the worn-out, modem life-style.

Our fight for a united Europe of peoples and against the forces of Darkness began under the sign of the Sun. Through truth it shall end in triumph. The Truth Shall Set You Free—through recognition of this, the will of our ethnic Europe will be strong enough for a new life form of these peoples to prevail. It shall be as my husband so beautifully expressed it, in a declaration hand-written while in captivity after the end of the war in May 1945:

In our continuing struggle, when after this 1940-1945 war a third conflict may be unavoidable, it will certainly be necessary to stand up with superhuman power. Indeed, such power will then be demanded of all other western European countries, too, including Germany. They wanted to destroy National Socialism. But another formulation, believing in the importance and significance of the cultures of the European peoples, will have to stand in its stead. For all that, however, the concept "Europe", with its traditions and its culture, certainly goes to the heart of every European. The will must remain in everyone to defend this domain where our forefathers and families have lived and worked. How the European idea fits in with Allied conceptions is today your concern. But since the source of European and Anglo-Saxon culture is nearly the same, it must be possible to define the basis for a general collaboration.

Let us never forget that we humans are children of the Sun. Nature must again become the basis for our actions and firmly anchor us in it. That is the only way for all peoples to preserve their individual cultures within the greater European sphere.

Per aspera ad astra! — Through Night Towards the Light!



**Die schwarze Sonne spricht-
Vergiss dein Leid, Es siegt
das Licht**

**The Black Sun speaks—
Forget your pain;
The Light shall triumph**

Epilogue

Summing up, I would like to comment briefly on the years that have passed since I wrote this book.

Today, I would once again like to commemorate all those, especially, who stood up for our cause, and who were called away all too soon by Fate, or tragically fell victim to the despotism of the victors after 1945 and suffered horribly as a result. I am proud of our older generation, which went through everything—before the war, during the war, and then again after 1945—until today, and in spite of all, have remained upright and true to our ideals.

Today we have to be clear that some kind of calculating power, unfortunately, is playing a criminal game with us, or better; said with the whole of Europe and the future of our children and grandchildren. This power has tried to annihilate peoples and intellectual elites all over Europe through terror bombing, starvation, execution, maltreatment and torture in prison, resulting in death, etc., etc.

As one writer recently put it

From 1945 till 1948 famine was prevalent in Germany, which for the most part could be attributed to deliberate Allied policy. Through restrictions on the import of foodstuffs and the obstruction of aid organisations, by cutting off the "corn belt" in the east of the German Reich, through mass expulsions, confiscations and the dismantling of industry, as well as directives for a drastic reduction of fertiliser production, the plight was systematically and purposely contrived. This deliberately induced famine reached its dramatic climax in the year 1947, and only after one could no longer justify the continued and systematic decimation of the defeated German people before the eyes of the world were countermeasures taken.

And to cite the author of *Crimes and Mercies,* James Bacque:

The total value of all war reparations which the Allies collected from Germany after the end of the war was astronomically high. According to the most

conservative estimates it amounted to at least $20,000,000, which in today's currency would equal approximately $120-$140 billion.

The Americans took at least twenty times as *much from* Germany as was given later on in Marshall Plan aid. This Marshall Plan was certainly a magnanimous and farsighted undertaking—a typically good American idea—but its realisation would have been impossible without German money. In other words, if Germany had not been relentlessly starved and plundered after the war, it would never have needed any Marshall Plan aid in the first place.

Revenge was the motive for this starvation scheme, and its blueprint bore the name of the then-U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Morgenthau. To this, one must add the systematic destruction of urban population centres during the war itself. The number of victims of this deliberate policy of mass starvation and extermination has been calculated at between 9.3 and 13.7 million for the years 1944-1950. Allied post-war policy in Germany was first and foremost one of massive genocide.

From the facts now available to us it is certainly clear that at the beginning of July 1941 the Soviet Union wanted to seize the whole of Europe, from Germany right through to Holland and the North Sea. German Troops were therefore more than justified in attacking this terrible enemy on June 22, 1941. It wasn't done for the amusement of the fabulous German Wehrmacht and Waffen *SS*—which from firsthand experience came to know the horrible facts—but simply to save all of Europe from this dreadful scourge. One cannot be grateful enough to the Germans—indeed, to Hitler himself—for this.

Would it be too much to say that had there been an Anglo-German rapprochement, the war between the German Reich and the Soviet Union could have been avoided? If Rudolf Hess's mission to Britain had been successful, he might have averted the escalation of the European war into a Second World War. Just think how much terror and suffering we might have been spared. How different both Europe and the world would look todayl

Every one of us should remember the bloodthirsty appeal from Soviet propagandist Ilya Ehrenburg to the Red Army divisions:

Kill! Kill! There is nothing in the Germans that is innocent, not the living and not the yet unborn. Follow the commands of Comrade Stalin and crush the fascist beast forever in its lair. Break with force the racial pride of the German women! Take them as your rightful prey! Kill, you gallant soldiers of the advancing Red Army.

Finally, from the bottom of my heart I would like to thank our *Führer,* his followers and the German people for having fought on to the bitter end, despite all the suffering they had to endure at the hands of the enemy. And to our younger generation I would like to wish both courage and faith in our people, helping them to tie together the torn thread and strengthen it for a sound and healthy Europe and Aryan world.

With unshaken faith,
Florentine S. Rost van Tonningen
April 20, 1998

Statement

1. Florentine S. Rost van Tonningen is the daughter of G.A. Heubel, former director and owner of Kol & Co., an Amsterdam brokerage firm, and co-owner of the bank ing firm of Vlaer & Kol in Utrecht.
2. After the Second World War, G.A. Heubel, a former millionaire who had never been a member of any politi cal organisation, had all of his possessions confiscated by the Dutch State, solely because of his German-Dutch double citizenship.
3. Her husband, Dr. Meinoud M. Rost van Tonningen, LL.D., had been a high commissioner for the League of Nations in Vienna, before turning to National Socialism after meeting with Adolf Hitler in 1936.
4. During the war, M.M. Rost van Tonningen was ap pointed president of the Bank of the Netherlands. After the war, on June 6, 1945, he was murdered in a prison in Scheveningen near The Hague, because he knew too much. The official explanation of his death was "sui cide", though the facts and circumstances—as well as eyewitnesses—clearly indicate that it was murder.
5. Mrs. F.S. Rost van Tonningen never received an offi cial death certificate for her husband, nor was she ever informed about the whereabouts of his final resting place. There never was a trial of Dr. M.M. Rost van Ton ningen, not even posthumously, because, as stated by the Attorney General, "His means were negative".
6. In 1950 F.S. Rost van Tonningen was granted a per sonal audience with Pope Pius XII. The Pope was well informed about the circumstances of Dr. M.M. Rost van

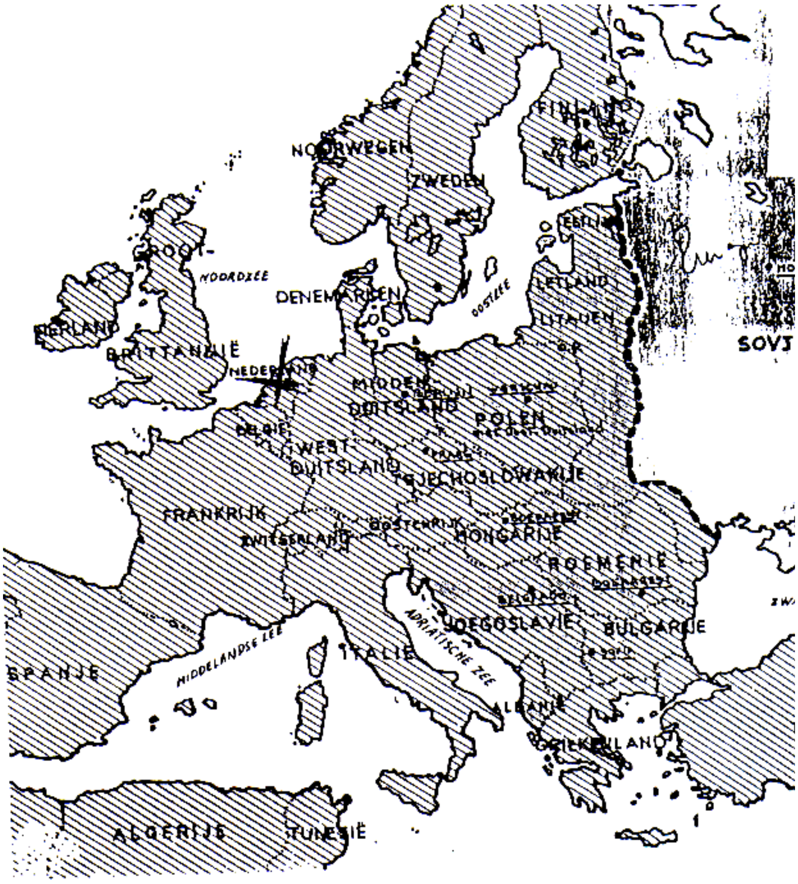
Tonningen's death and expressed his willingness to co-operate in bringing the facts to light.

7. In this same year *1950,* with an initial capital of only 350 Dutch guilders, Florentine S. Rost van Tonningen was able to start her own firm, Verina Inc., producer of electric-heating units, in Velp, Holland. In 1975, on the occasion of her company's 25-year jubilee, she was pro claimed*Export businesswoman of the Year.*
8. In 1984, at the zenith of her company's success, she suddenly had to be taken to the hospital for inexplicable reasons—possibly as a result of poisoning. During her absence the RABO Bank appointed R. Kenswil—a man of Surinamese origin—to the directorship of Verina. In spite of Kenswil's deliberate mismanagement, the RABO Bank continued to supply credit. The firm was now mis used for money laundering. After having served that purpose, it was bankrupted 18 months later.
9. Falsified bookkeeping records resulted in allegations against Mrs. F.S. Rost van Tonningen of fraudulent transfers of money from her own firm. This caused a hostile tax inspector to bring astronomical debt assess ments against her. The tax authorities tried to confiscate her home and, as a final measure of chicanery, even her furniture and other possessions. In this devious way the Dutch State was able to confiscate her recently-granted pension, with the excuse that she had made "undesirable political statements"...
10. 1996 was the critical year in which her house was to be sold, but with the help of friends she was able to fore stall this. As her legacy to posterity, Mrs. F.S. Rost van Tonningen now declared her intention of making her home into a documentation centre of the Nationalist movement, both before and after as well as during the war.

Die Heimat

Wenn ich den Wandrer frage: Wo kommst Du her?
Vom Hause, vom Hause, spricht er und seufzet schwer. Wenn ich der Wandrer frage: Wo gehst Du hin? Nach Hause, nach Hause, spricht er mit frohem Sinn. Wenn ich den Wandrer frage: wo fiihrt Dein Gluck? Im Hause, im Hause, spricht er mit feuchtem Blick. Und wenn er mich nun fraget: Was druckt Dich schwer? Ich kann nicht nach Hause, hab keine Heimat mehr.

By my father, G.A. Heubel
Hilversum, September 1925



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No. 10,258. FRIDAY, MARCH 24, 1933. ONE PENNY.

JUDEA DECLARES WAR ON GERMANY



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"Daily Express" Special Political Correspondent.

A STRANGE AND UNFORESEEN SEQUEL HAS EMERGED FROM THE STORIES OF GERMAN JEW-BAITING.

The whole of Israel throughout the world is uniting to declare an economic and financial war on Germany.

Hitherto the cry has gone up: "Germany is persecuting the Jews." If the present plans are carried out, the Hitlerite cry will be: "The Jews are persecuting Germany."

Plans For Action Maturing

In Europe And America

HITLER CABINET MINISTER ARRESTED LAST NIGHT

Mr. Churchill's Withering Attack On Premier

Officer Describes The Girl

DAYS OF LOVE IN BERLIN

'BROUGHT US NEARER TO WAR'

FOUR YEARS' WORK WITHOUT ANY SUCCESS

OUR DON QUIXOTE

Mrs. George Lansbury Dead



THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR ENTERTAINS

AN ALL-RED TALKIE FOR ALL-WHITE DIPLOMATS

MISSING GUESTS

SUTCLIFFE AND PAYNTER OUT FOR "DUCKS."

Canon Shot At Prayer

SISTER FINDS HIM KNEELING AT HIS BEDSIDE

The Queen Who Lost Her Throne



STOP PRESS

ENGLAND v. N.Z.: FIRST TEST.

Hinweise: Daily Express wurde im Jahre 19oo von A. Pearson gegründet. Vorbild war die Londoner Morgenzeitung Daily Mail, die 1896 von A.C.Harmsworth (Lord Northcliffe) gegründet worden war. Seit 1919 gehörte die D.E. zur Beaverbrook-Gruppe (mit Evening Standard und Sunday Express). Nach Daily Mirror ist so um die ..Sechziger Jahre The Daily Express ... mit" Circulation: 4 329 128.Much more aggressive in display than Mail." (1 .. die zweitstärkste Londoner Tageszeitung gewesen. 1972 betrug die Auflage etwa 3,4 Mill. während die Daily Mail nur 1,75 Mill. hatte.

Anm. zu (1 : Nach Kenneth E. Olson: The History Makers. 1966 louisiana state university press baton rouge, S.32.

Behauptungen verschiedener Kreise, die Daily Express wäre in jüdischen Händen gewesen und vor geringer Zeit " zahlungsunfähig " veräußert worden, konnten bis zum Druck nicht geklärt werden. S A D ,24.3.78

A u s z ü g e der deutschen Übersetzung von 1.u.2. Seite von *J U D E A DECLARES WAR ON GERMANY* 24.März 1933 siehe auf der nächsten Seite.

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The Jewish declaration of war on Germany in 1933

Index

Ablij,P.,62
Amerongen, 146
Amil, 197
Amsterdam, 10; 11; 13; 16; 17; 24; 26; 35; 36; 41; 68; 74; 83; 92; 94; 108; 115; 130; 131; 132; 133; 134; 135; 137; 141; 142; 177; 179; 206; 218
Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, 142 Apeldoorn, 136; 137; 207 Arbeiders Pers (Workers' Press), 68 Arnhem, 80; 136; 137; 140; 188; 200; 207 Artis, Amsterdam zoo, 13; 35; 36; 48; 49
Aschmann, G.,91;92 ATL, Algemene Toezicht Leden, 124
Atyehwar,56;73;130 Austria, 30; 35; 40; 58; 59; 60; 61; 87; 119; 189; 190
Avegoor, 94

B

Baarn, 193; 194
Baars, J., 42
Bacque, James, 215
Bali, 50; 51; 56
Balilla, Italian youth organisation, 49
Bandung, 50; 55; 62 Bank Albert de Bary, 92 Bank der Deutschen Arbeit, 92
Bank of the Netherlands, 92; 97; 103; 106; 108; 109; 110; 114; 120; 132; 133; 146; 149; 151; 159; 173; 218
Bartels, Dr. M., 54
Batavia, 48; 49
Bayreuth, 47; 202
Beck, 47
Beethoven, 143
Belgium, 70; 110
Bene, 0., 92
Berchtesgaden, 59; 199; 201; 202
Bergen, Ans van den, 131
Berghof, 199; 202 Berlin, 32; 47; 59; 60; 68; 74; 76; 77; 82; 83; 95; 102; 108; 114; 117; 123; 134; 153
Berlin Olympics, 48
Bernhard, Prince of the Netherlands, 78; 79; 82; 159; 194; 207
Besant, Annie, 28 Bibra, von, 60
Bierens de Haan, Dr. J.A., 35; 36; 37; 38; 48
Blankenvoort, D., 127 Block, Prof. M.A., 184 Blokzijl, Max, 206 Bodeldijk, J., 10 Bollaan, Mrs. C., 179 Bonaparte, Napoleon, 82; 130; 168 Bonninghausen tot Herickhave, E.L.M.ThJ. von, 83; 101
Bormann, Martin, 96
Borrns, Dr. August, 41
Bosch, Jan van den, cousin, 102
Brakman, Zus, 97
Brand, Dr., 33; 34
Brazil, 142; 209

Breda, 70; 130
Bredero, G.A., 10
Bretton Woods, 205
Brocket!, 30
Bracken Fock, 117
Brune-Verker, Mrs. A. de, 127; 129
Buddenbrock, Dr. von, 34
Buhler,Dr.A.,92;110
Bund Deutscher Madel, 52; 71
Bureau of War Documentation, 74; 206
Burnett, Francis, 25
Bussum, 12; 22

C.C. Polder, prison camp, 165
Calais, 77
Carpathian Mountains, 135 Cecilia, nurse, 169; 170 Chamberlain, Sir Neville, 70; 212 Cherkassy, 135
Chevalier, 117 China, 45; 64
Christian, H, 123; 124 Clercq, Renede, 41 Clingendael, 88; 138; 142 Colijn, Dr. H., 73; 74; 75
Commerzbank, 92 Compiegnes, 154 Cool, E.J., 127 Cuxhaven, 169; 171

D

Daalen, General van, 73
Daladier, E., 70
Damhof, 160
Darre, Walter, 47; 74
De Hamer (The Hammer), 66
DeWaag, 193
Delft, 57
Deterding, Sir Henri, 61; 62
Deventer, 130; 134; 171
Dieckhoff, H.H., 60
Diemen, 136; 138
Diepenveen, 9; 132; 149
Dieren, Ir. E. van, 126
Dieters, G., 94
Doctors van Leeuwen, Prof., 48
Dollfuss, E., 58; 59
Donitz, Grand Admiral H., 153; 154
Dresden, 174; 200 Dresdener Bank, 92 Drost, Prof. Dr., 35; 36
Dulle, Dr., 169 Dutch East India, 22; 26; 27; 39; 44; 46; 48; 51; 52; 53; 55; 56; 62; 64; 73; 76; 107; 130; 157; 175 Duymaer van Twist, General, 73

E

Ebbe Raven, 132 Ebert, Friedrich, 39 Eck, Lien van, 72
Eden, Anthony, 47; 162
Ehrenburg, Ilya, 216 Eindhoven, 136; 138 Eisner, Kurt, 39
Ellewoutsdijk, prison camp, 78; 165
Elst, prison camp, 156; 157; 159
England, 25; 32; 45; 46; 77; 104; 126; 141; 170; 207; 212
Estonia, 62 Etten, H. van, 135
Eysden, van, 42 Eysinga, Prof. Dr. W.M.J., 57

Fascistenbond (Fascist Union), 42
Feldmeyer, H., 66; 81; 84; 94; 97; 98; 101; 102; 111; 120

Fentener van Vlissingen, Jan,
cousin, 141; 191; 192
Fiebig,Dr.Ir.H.R.F.,93
Fischbock, Dr. H., 93; 121
Flensburg, 153
Flushing, 77; 138
Fonkert, Emmy, 97
France, 42; 45; 76
Franck, Dr., 54
Frassati, Luciana, 182
Frederick the Great, King of
Prussia, 154
Frederiks, W.M., 148
Freikorps, 39
Friesland, 150
Funk, Walter, 203

Geelkerken, C. van, 42; 43; 72;
101; 118; 119 Gelderland,
137 Genechten, Dr. van, 42
Geneva, 57; 61; 69; 104
Geneva, Convention of, 153
Genoa, 48; 49; 63 Gille, 135
Giobbe, Monsignor, 183 Gips,
F.B.J., 121; 126 Goebbels,
Joseph, 202 Goedewagen, Prof.
T., 184 Goedhuys,W.,83
Goethe, J.W. von, 204 Gooi, het,
18; 192 Goring, Reichsmarschall
Herman,
82; 93; 96; 110; 125; 135; 139
Goseling, Dr. C.M.J., 117; 119
Goslar,12;23;30;47;131;172;
173; 174; 176; 177; 180; 183
Goudsberg, the, 43; 52; 72; 97
Great Britain, 46; 62; 70; 73; 75;
76; 79; 80; 81; 200; 216
Grebbe Line, 80
Groen, Koos, 162
Groningen, 70; 150; 163 Grote, Ir.
Franz Graf, 94; 163 Guepin, Mrs.,
29

H

Haagespraak, 43
Haas,Nico de,66;101;lll
Hadow, 60
Hagmeier, Dr., 34
Hague, The, 23; 57; 70; 77; 79; 84;
91; 97; 98; 100; 113; 114; 117;
123; 129; 130; 138; 161; 178;
179; 180; 181; 183; 185; 188;
189; 209; 210; 218
Hahn, 91; 92 Halm, Dr.
E., 83 Hamburg, 24; 30
Hamer, P.M.C.J., 209
Haren Noman, Mrs. van,
grandmother, 17; 22; 23; 24; 25;
26; 102; 123; 177; 187
Haren Noman, W.J. van,
grandfather, 13; 14; 17; 22; 23;
24; 25; 26 Harloff, 119
Harskamp, prison camp, 157; 162;
163
Harster,Dr.W.,94 Harting, 52
Harz, 18; 131 Heck, Prof. Dr. L,
82 Heemskerk Diiker, W. van, 66
Heemskerk-Duker, W. van, 111
Heerema, Ir. P., 126 Hegel, 204
Heidegger, Martin, 204
Heiss, Mr. And Mrs., 102
Helgoland, 34; 35; 36 Herder,
J.G., 33 Herwaarden, van, 54
Hess, Rudolf, 39; 70; 216
Hesse, nurse, 11

Heubel, Gustav Adolf, grandfather,
30 Heubel, Gustav Adolph, my father,
3; 11; 29; 99; 100; 218 Heubel, Miss F.S., 38; 100; 114 Heubel, Willem Johannes, my
brother Wim, 11; 12; 15; 16; 17; 18; 20; 21; 22; 24; 25; 28; 29; 31; 46; 47; 48; 49; 52; 55; 61; 63; 64; 65; 81; 94; 97; 98; 101; 111; 115; 131; 145; 146; 147; 148; 155; 170; 172; 175 Heubel-Kol, A.E., grandmother,
13; 16; 22; 23; 30; 31 Heubel-van Haren Noman, Mrs.,
mother, 99; 100 Heutz, General J.B. van, 75 Heuven Goedhart, Dr. van, 168
Hilversum,3;12;13;16;17;18; 20; 24; 29; 30; 31; 33; 48; 81; 99; 100; 101; 123; 177
Himmler, Heinrich, 72; 78; 89; 90; 95; 96; 97; 99; 101; 102; 111; 114; 117; 123; 131; 135; 138; 139; 141; 180; 202; 203
Hindenburg, field marshal
P.L.H.A. von, 40; 47 Hintze, H., 109
Hirschfeld,HansM.,74;110
Hitler, Adolf, 32; 34; 39; 40; 43; 44; 46; 47; 51; 59; 60; 65; 66; 70; 71; 74; 75; 77; 78; 87; 91; 102; 111; 114; 118; 119; 122; 123; 124; 138; 139; 140; 151; 152; 154; 180; 182; 199; 200; 201; 202; 203; 204; 216; 218
Hitlerjugend,52;60;71;121
Hoekstra, P.H., 126 Hoeven, J. van der, 193 Hoey Smith, J. van, 127
Hofman Sr, A.A., 126 HSlderlin, 204 Hoist-van der Schalk, Henriette R.,
41
Hoom, 81
Hope & Co., 58
Hope, Thomas and Adrien, 58
Houten, B. van, 111
Houten, Bruns van, 115
Houten, J. van, 117
Hugenberg, Dr. A., 40
Huidekoper, 18
Hungary, 134
Hushahn,H.,91

I.G. Farben, 62 Idenburg, Mrs., 20 India, British, 45; 53; 130 Ispert, Dr. W., 83; 94
Italy, 131; 143; 188

Jan Tabak, Hotel, 176
Japan, 45; 46; 47; 62; 64; 92; 105; 148; 175 Java, 27; 50; 51
Jeugdstorm, 43; 50; 52; 65; 71; 72; 101; 111; 121 Jodl, General, 153 Jong, Drs. L. de, 208 Juliana, Princess, 29 Juliana, Queen of the Netherlands,
29; 181; 184; 192; 193; 194; 207
Jungclaus,R., Ill Jurgens, police officer, 164

K

Kant, 204
Karsten, 176
Kanvendel Mountains, 30
Kehlsteinhaus, 199 Kenswil, R.A., 196; 197; 219 Kharkov, 132

Hoorn, 81
Hope & Co., 58
Hope, Thomas and Adrien, 58
Houten, B. van, 111
Houten, Bruns van, 115
Houten, J. van, 117
Hugenberg, Dr. A., 40
Huidekoper, 18
Hungary, 134
Hushahn, H., 91

I.G. Farben, 62 Idenburg,
Mrs., 20 India, British, 45;
53; 130 Ispert, Dr. W., 83; 94
Italy, 131; 143; 188

Jan Tabak, Hotel, 176
Japan, 45; 46; 47; 62; 64; 92; 105;
148; 175 Java, 27; 50; 51
Jeugdstorm, 43; 50; 52; 65; 71; 72;
101; 111; 121 Jodl, General,
153 Jong, Drs. L. de, 208 Juliana,
Princess, 29 Juliana, Queen of the
Netherlands,
29; 181; 184; 192; 193; 194;
207
Jungclaus, R., Ill Jurgens,
police officer, 164

K

Kant, 204
Karsten, 176
Karwendel Mountains, 30
Kehlsteinhaus, 199
Kenswil, R.A., 196; 197; 219
Kharkov, 132
Knolle,Fritz,75;95
Koch, Use, 180
Kohlrose, General, 159
Kol&Co., 13; 47; 218
Kol, Eef, uncle, 29; 47
Kol,Jan, 11; 31
Kolk,W. van der, 160; 210
Korea, 45
Kovel, 135
Kranefuss, P., 95; 96; 99; 102
Krantz, Dr. L.P., 126
Krantz, Dr.D., 126
Kreischer, Wim, 161; 210
Kreuk, C.A. de, 165
Krijn, gardener, 12
Krishnamurti, 28
Kruger, Paul, 41; 42
Kruseman, D., brother-in-law, 76
Kruseman-Heubel, sister Annie,
179
KuKluxKlan,195
Kuyper, A., 73

Lages, Willy, 94
Landsberg am Lech, 40
Laren, 11; 176
League of Nations, 57; 58; 59; 6
69; 92; 104; 182; 218
Leeuwarden, 138; 150 Leeuwen
Boonkamp, P. van, 12(Leiden,
57; 68; 69; 76; 138; 180 Ley,
Dr., 47; 71 Lombok, 55; 56; 130
London, 44; 68; 73; 74; 82; 87;'
104; 108; 134; 136; 137; 166
168; 205
Loon, W. van, 82 Lorenz,
Konrad, 35 Lorenz, Werner, 78
Luciano, Lucky, 130
Ludendorff, General E., 39
Lunteren, 43; 52; 72; 120

Nationale Dagblad, Het, 67; 68; 69;
70; 78; 84; 116; 120
Nederlandsche Oost Compagnie
(NOC), 125; 126; 134 Nes, Dr.
van, 77 Neurath, von, 59 Neuthorn,
Dr., 163 New Guinea, Dutch, 51;
52; 157;
159
Nietzsche, Friedrich, 204
Nieuwenkamp, family, 43 Nijgh,
Dr., 78 Nijks, H.J., 163 Nijmegen,
134; 136; 181 Noordhuis,
Gerhardus H.J., 68; 70 NSB,
Nationaal Socialistische
Beweging,42;43;50;51;52;
57; 60; 61; 65; 67; 78; 79; 80;
81; 82; 85; 90; 96; 101; 116;
117; 119; 120; 121; 122; 123;
124; 139; 140; 159; 162; 179;
193; 194; 204; 206; 212
NSDAP, National Sozialistische
Deutsche Arbeiters Partei, 40;
62; 96; 118; 121; 122
Nuremberg, 47; 71; 88; 89

O

Obersalzberg, 199 Oerlemans, Prof.
J.W., 211 Oldenbarneveldt, van,
211 Op ten Noort, Lady Juul, 97
Orange, House of, 82; 84 Oranje
Vrijstaat (Orange Free
State), 42 Oranje, Mr., 184
Oranje, Radio, 87; 136; 148
Oss, 117; 207
Osterreichische Kreditanstalt, 58
Overhoff, C.F., 142 Overijssel,
137; 165; 205
Pahud de Montagnes, Charles,
cousin, 141
Papen, Franz von, 40; 60; 61
Paris, 25; 68 Pfaff, Colonel,
79; 207 Pfaff, son of, 79
Phipps, Sir Eric, 58; 59 Fiji,
160
Pius XII, Pope, 166; 182; 183; 218
Poland, 152 Pollema, Dr. R., 165
Poncet, Franfois, 47 Foot, 160
Porsche, Ferdinand, 71
Portielje, Dr., 13; 48
Posthuma, Dr., 124
Posthumus, Dr. N.W., 208
Potocki, Count, 152 Powell,
Lord Baden, 32 Prague, 34;
60 Prank, 160 Puhl, Emil,
203

R

RABO Bank, 196; 219
Rambonnet,F.L., 126; 149; 157
Ranter, SS Obergruppenfuhrer
HansAlbin,29;74;89;90;91;
95; 101; 102; 124; 135; 139;
140; 141; 192; 200; 207; 208
Reichsautobahnen, 48; 71; 93
Reichsbank, 92; 202; 203 Remer,
Major General O.E., 154
Resistance, 29; 79; 87; 94; 124;
135; 136; 139; 140; 141; 142;
161; 162; 207; 208; 209 Reus,
Dr. de, 160 Reydon, Dr., 124
Rhijnauwen, prison camp, 164'
Ribbentrop, Joachim von, 60; 117
Riefenstahl, Leni, 48

Speyart van Woerden, Baron, 207
Spoor, 26
Stadler, Ir. Theo, 72
Staf, Ir. C., 126
Stalin, Josef, 75; 212; 217
Stalingrad, 92
Steenbergen, Dr. van, 74
Steinhauer, Dr., 89
Stephan, Governor, 50
Stolk, Drs. A., 197
Struycken, Dr., 183
Sukabumi, 52
Sumatra, 27; 49; 51; 53; 56; 62; 64; 201
Surabaya, 55 Switzerland, 41; 143 Szembek, Count, 152; 153

Tack, P.J., 127
Taiwan, 45
Tanjung Karang, 49; 53
Tannenberg Memorial, 47
Terschelling, 70; 150; 152; 176
Todt,Dr. Fritz, 48; 71 Toggenburg, 91; 92 Tokyo, 44 Transvaal, 42
Trip, Dr. L.J.A., 109 Troelstra, P.J., 73 Tuyll van Serooskerken, Dr. A.M. Baron van, 162

u

Ukraine, 128; 135
United States of America, 44; 45; 47; 68; 82; 105; 130; 153; 167; 200; 212 Utrecht, 11; 13; 20; 30; 31; 32; 33; 138; 190; 207; 218

Vaart Smit, Dr. H.W. van der, 162
Valepp, 102 Vatican, The, 182
VDA,VolksDeutscheAusland, 121
Velp, 188; 189; 190; 192; 193; 196; 197; 219 Verbond van Nationalisten (Union of Nationalists), 42 Verdi, Giuseppe, 142 Verguide Hand, prison camp, 162
Verina,9;190;196;219 Vessem, Dr. van, 42 Vienna, 58; 60; 85; 87; 88; 93; 116; 218
Vlaer&Kol, 11; 12; 13; 31; 218
Vlasboom, Mrs., 156 Vlasboom, the Rev. D., 155 Volkse Werkgemeenschap, Folkish Work Group, 66
Volkswagen, 71
Voute, E.J., 126

W

Wachter, Baron von, 59
Wageningen, 22; 27 Wagner, Richard, 47; 101; 204 Wagner, Winifred, 202 Warsaw, 61
Washington, 44; 134; 152
Wassenaar, 138 Waterlinie, 149
Weesp, 133 Wehofsich, Dr. F., 75
Weimar Republic, 203 Weimar, Henk, 101 Westerbork, prison camp, 157; 163; 164
Wezep, prison camp, 165
Wickel, 117 Wieringa, 163 Wildeman, Marie, 21

Wildschut, Johan, 208; 209
Wilhelmina, Queen of the Netherlands, 79; 81; 82; 84; 148; 195
Wimmer, Dr. F., 121
Winkelman, General H.G., 78
Winschoten, prison camp, 164
Witt, Brothers de, 211
Woeste Hoeve, 207
Wolff, Karl, 114
Woudenberg, J., 81; 118; 119

Zaayer, Dr. J., 206
Zahn, Dr. C.W., 126
Zee, Nanda van der, 205; 206
Zeeland, 78; 79; 81
Zeilmaker, W.P., friend and comrade, 2
Zimmermann, Dr. A.R., 58; 61
Zugspitze, 30
Zwarte Front (Black Front), 42

About the Author

By Matt Koehl



Very few persons in the world today have stood as close to so many key events and leading personalities of the 20th century as has the author of these memoirs.

As the wife of Dr. Meinoud Marinus Rost van Tonningen, the former high commissioner for the League of Nations in Vienna and president of the Bank of the Netherlands, she met them all—heads of State, princes of the Church, scientists and artists, heroes and scoundrels, those who fought for a New Order and those who opposed it—from Prince Bernhard, Princess Juliana, Engelbert Dollfuss, Pope Pius XII, Konrad Lorenz, Willem Mengelberg, Winifred Wagner and Otto Skorzeny, _ _ to Anton Mussert, Arthur Seyss-Inquart, H.A. Rauter, Alfred Rosenberg, Joseph Goebbels, Rudolf Hess and Heinrich Himmler, not to mention the leading figure of the age, *Adolf Hitler.* As such, she is in a unique position to illuminate many of the lesser-known aspects of European policy during this century, as well as of those personalities involved.

In this special edition of her memoirs, Mrs. Rost van Tonningen now takes the English-speaking reader on an unusual excursion behind the scenes of some of the great events of modern time, which she experienced as both observer and active participant.

Since its appearance in German translation in 1992 under the title *Auf der Suche nach meinem Ehering* (In Search of My Wedding Ring)—following on the earlier confiscation by the Dutch government of the original *Op zoek naar mijn huwelijicsring—this* book has generated considerable controversy, particularly in leading circles in Holland, where wartime skeletons still remain locked away in dark closets.

That controversy has not been without its price, however. Because of her steadfast refusal to recant, the author has been subjected to a vicious campaign of hate, hostility and persecution seldom seen since the witch-hunts of the Middle Ages. Wanton denunciation and hounding by a scurrilous press, mob action, physical attack, recurrent house searches, monstrous fines and threat of imprisonment, the withdrawal of her subsistence, as well as attempts to evict her from her own home—these are some of the devices which have been employed in an attempt to destroy this incredibly brave woman. Even her faithful German-shepherd companion of many years was not spared, when it was poisoned in a spiteful attempt to destroy her—all for honestly speaking her mind and bearing witness to that which she has seen and heard.

Not only have all these attempts failed to silence her, however, but in a backhanded sort of way they attest to the very integrity of her account as an honest historical record. Unlike many other contemporary memoirs from the same period, this extraordinary document is *not* written for any opportune or self-serving purpose, but simply to tell the truth. Despite all the adversity and hardship which she has endured, the author has chosen to remain faithful to the same ideals and values she has always embraced.

This, then, is the personal story of a most remarkable woman, a woman who, through both triumph and tragedy, has remained ever staunch and steadfast in her convictions as well as in her unswerving commitment to the truth.